

PRESIDENTS SPEAK TO THE NATION
REPUBLIC DAY SPEECHES
(1950 - 2000)

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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**



ISBN : 81-230-0929

Price : Rs. 350.00

Published by the Director, Publications Division,
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting,
Government of India, Patiala House, New Delhi-110 001

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Publisher's Note

The Publications Division has been publishing selected speeches of Presidents and Prime Ministers of India over the years. The present volume contains Republic Day speeches of the Presidents of India from 1950 to 2000 to coincide India's fifty years of Republic. For India, the years 1950 to 2000 have been witness to the rapid strides it has made in the fields of Agriculture, Industry, Science & Technology and others. The drought and famine prone country is now surplus in foodgrains. Pathbreaking achievements have also been made in many other areas.

The Head of the State on Republic Day speaks to people on the policies and programmes for shaping the future of the country. We hope, this volume gives readers a perspective of changes that has taken place in India's socio economic ethos.

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Dr. Rajendra Prasad

(26 01.1950 to 13 05.1962)

The Task Ahead

THIS IS A memorable day in our annals. Let us begin by offering our thanks to the Almighty God who has made it possible for us to see this day, to the Father of the Nation who showed us and the world his infallible method of *Satyagraha* and led us along the path to freedom, and to the countless men and women whose suffering and sacrifice won for us our independence and made possible the establishment of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India.

Today, for the first time in our long and chequered history, we find the whole of this vast land, from Kashmir in the north to Cape Comorin in the south, from Kathiawad and Kutch in the west to Cocanada and Kamrup in the east, brought together under the jurisdiction of one Constitution and one Union which has taken upon itself the responsibility of the welfare of more than 320 million men and women who inhabit it. Its administration will now be carried on by and for its people. This country possesses limitless natural resources and the momentous opportunity to make its vast population happy and prosperous, and also, to make its contribution to the establishment of peace in the world.

The objective of our Republic is to secure justice, liberty and equality for its citizens and to promote fraternity among the people who inhabit its extensive territories and follow different religions, speak various languages and observe their peculiar customs. We want to live on terms of friendship with all other countries. Our object is to achieve progress for our country in every field. Our future programme includes eradication of disease, poverty and ignorance. We are anxious to rehabilitate and resettle all those displaced persons who have suffered and are still

suffering great hardships and privations. Those who are handicapped in any way deserve special help. It is essential that in order to achieve this, we must safeguard the freedom that is ours today. But economic and social freedom are as urgent a demand of the times as political freedom. The present requires of us even greater devotion and sacrifice than the past. I hope and pray that we shall be able to utilize the opportunity that has been given to us. We should dedicate all our material and physical strength to the service of our country and our people. I also hope that the people, while rejoicing on the advent of this auspicious and happy day, will realise their heavy responsibility and rededicate themselves to the fulfilment of the great objective for which the Father of the Nation lived, worked and died.

Success and Failure A Retrospect

JUST ONE YEAR has elapsed since India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic and the Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly came into force. It is worthwhile taking stock of what has been achieved and wherein we have failed.

The early part of the year was disfigured by communal tension and ugly incidents occurred in East Bengal leading to a large exodus of Hindus from East to West Bengal. These were followed by similar incidents and exodus of Muslims from West to East Bengal. A pact was arrived at between our Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Pakistan as a result of which the situation has gradually improved and a large number of the emigrants have gone back to their original homes. It is to be hoped that confidence will be created so that a repetition of such incidents may become

impossible Minorities must be assured of a safe and honourable existence, and given opportunities to grow and develop and become contented and loyal citizens of the State to which they belong

Side by side with the communal pact, there was also a trade pact with Pakistan which partially enabled trade between India and Pakistan to flow freely It is to be regretted that on account of the failure to reach an agreement on the question of exchange-ratio, trade relations are not yet established on a footing of profit to both parties and each has had to look to distant countries for the supply of some of its requirements and the disposal of its surplus goods

Disputes with Pakistan continue on some matters which are vital The Security Council of the United Nations had appointed Sir Owen Dixon as mediator for bringing about a settlement of the Kashmir question He spent some months in this country, but unfortunately his efforts failed Recent talks in London have led to no better results We have always been prepared to let the people of Kashmir decide freely what they want, but we cannot be expected and are not prepared to abdicate our legal rights or shirk our moral duty to the people of Kashmir pending that decision

The question of evacuee property is of vital importance to us, but we have not been able as yet to secure a settlement with the result that our work of rehabilitating millions of people has become impossible of satisfactory accomplishment

Apart from disputes with Pakistan, our relations with other Asian countries have been most friendly and cordial—so also with countries further abroad We hold and believe that armed conflict and war solve no existing problems but create new ones and with the progress in the invention of destructive weapons now achieved, a war spells ruin and devastation on an unprecedented scale and threatens the extinction of modern civilisation With that conviction, our

Prime Minister has used all the prestige of his great personality and the goodwill of this country to limit the scope and extent of conflict. The deep wounds of the last World War have not yet been healed even in countries which are supposed to have won it—not to speak of those that lost it. We can only hope and pray that humanity will be spared another disaster. The greater and stronger a country, the heavier is its responsibility to do all it can to avoid and avert disaster.

Although we are a republic, we have decided to remain in the Commonwealth. We have maintained the friendliest relations with Great Britain and other members of the Commonwealth, based on a recognition of one another's complete independence and a mutual understanding of one another's interests. Our regret is that no progress has been possible in securing for people of Indian origin, born and settled in South Africa, a position as citizens of that country consistent with self-respect and the requirements of civilised life.

Coming nearer home, we can take credit for having done whatever was possible with our resources in rehabilitating those who had been forced to leave their hearths and homes and properties and estates and to emigrate to India from Pakistan. There were at the end of November 1950 more than 3 lakh of persons on dole in relief camps. More than 8 lakh of displaced families from Pakistan have been allotted land for cultivation. Roofed accommodation in urban areas has been secured for more than 21 lakh of displaced persons either in evacuee houses or in barracks, government quarters, etc., or in newly-built houses. Small loans have been given to more than 140,000 people, the total amount being more than Rs. 9 crore. Big loans have been given to displaced industrialists and businessmen numbering 5,000, the total amount being nearly Rs. 5 crore. Employment has been secured by the Employment Exchanges for more than 1-1/2 lakh of persons. Altogether, Government expenditure on displaced persons during the financial years 1947-48 to 1950-51 is estimated at Rs. 98.50 crore. The displaced persons have

suffered great privations with patience and dignity, and have been trying to restart life and stand on their own legs as best they can. With all our efforts, however, the work of rehabilitation is yet far from being complete and, considering its tremendousness which was added to considerably in West Bengal in the early part of the year, it could not be expected to be completed. All that I can say is that the Union and State Governments are keen and anxious to do whatever is possible and with the experience that has been gained, the work is being tackled with greater effectiveness and speed.

The financial and economic position of the country has been constantly engaging the attention of our ministers. It is to be regretted that on account of financial stringency, we are not able to undertake constructive work on as large a scale as we would wish to. Some large projects which are expected to yield great benefits by controlling floods and providing irrigation and electric energy on a large scale—leading to industrial development—have registered satisfactory progress. Our only regret is that we are not able to undertake more such works and to spend as much over those already in hand as we would like to. In other directions also, greater progress would have been achieved if more finance were available and the money market had not been as tight as it has been. Production has not kept pace with requirements. This has been so, especially in the matter of food, largely on account of causes beyond our control. We have had a series of natural calamities which have damaged our crops on an extensive scale. We have difficult and anxious times ahead and need all the foresight, resourcefulness and sacrifice our people are capable of, to tide over them. We are trying to have larger imports than we have ever done hitherto, but it is not so much these imports and their proper and equitable distribution—essential as these are—that will really solve the problem. It is the resourcefulness and determination of the people that will enable us to see things through. The years open with a large balance of trade against us, but when once we decided to put it right and set to work, we have succeeded in wiping it out. So, God willing, shall we do

with the food problem.

Our Constitution has come into force, but we are still passing through a period of transition and are being governed by certain transitory provisions laid down by it. This will continue till the general elections are held under the Constitution. Preparations are being made for them, but the work is so vast, involving more than 170 million voters and more than 3,500 seats to be filled up, that it has not been possible to complete them. It is hoped that we shall be able to hold the elections in November-December next.

The work of consolidation of the former Indian States and assimilating them in what used to be Indian Provinces, has gone on successfully. Under the Constitution, they have as honoured a place and as useful part to play as any other unit of the country. The burden of this work as also of maintaining law and order in the country was borne by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel whose passing away at this critical time in our history has dealt a stunning blow to us and created a void which cannot be filled up. His farsightedness, matchless powers of persuasion and organisation, a realistic appreciation of the situation and firmness and determination have brought under one federal constitution and one central administration a much larger part of the country than ever in its long and chequered history.

Our work as a free nation has just begun. We are confronted with difficulties within and the horizon is overcast with dark clouds without. We have to gird up our loins and face them. God helps those who help themselves. So let us deserve God's help.

Answer the Call

ON THE EVE of the third anniversary of our Republic, I extend my warmest greetings and good wishes to you all

It is well to recall that we were faced at the very dawn of our freedom by problems which required the concentration of all our energies for their solution. We have not only warded off the dangers that appeared to many to be a historic inevitability but have also forged the institutions and instruments of a modern State. If we look back today we see how stage by stage this task has been accomplished. We had at first to devote ourselves to defeat the forces of political disintegration and social disorder. You are aware how our late leader, Sardar Patel, successfully accomplished the task of integrating what were called the Indian States within the first two years of our free existence. Simultaneously we filled the vacuum that had arisen in the administration, the army and the other branches of the State system.

Thus we completed the first stage of our journey in the solution of the problems inherent in the transformation of an alien into a national State. In the next stage of our journey we forged the institutions of democracy. It is now an event of history how the Constituent Assembly constituted our land and people into a sovereign democratic State in which political power, economic opportunities and cultural conquests were to be equally shared by every individual and class without any discrimination of any kind whatsoever. The peaceful nature of the process with which such a Constitution was adopted in our land should not make any of us miss its great and historic significance. In the history of mankind and nations hardly a parallel can be found where the State power and economic and cultural opportunities were made equally available to all individuals, classes, creeds and sexes without prolonged struggle,

bitterness and bloodshed and indeed with eager willingness as has been done in our land. The Constituent Assembly compressed that exciting history into a brief and peaceful span of our national life.

The third stage of our journey began with our entering upon the first General Elections under the Constitution. At this time last year you, the people of India, were making choice of the programme which you desired your Government to follow and the persons who were to implement the programme of your choice. These elections were, as I had said even before, a test of our political sagacity, administrative capacity and devotion to democratic processes. The vastness of the number of voters on the basis of adult franchise and the extent of the organisation required to carry out the elections were indeed stupendous and certainly unprecedented in the history of democratic elections. Restraint in election propaganda, political sagacity on the part of electors and, above all, freedom to vote as one desired were required and were forthcoming in abundant measure. In this crucial test I may say in all humility we have come out quite successful.

Besides this we also have successfully established the legal basis and means for carrying through a far-reaching revolution in the agrarian system of our country. In almost all parts of the country the Zamindari and Jagirdari systems have been or are being abolished by law. The different State Governments have been busy taking steps to acquire the Zamindaris and it is hoped that in the near future India will have been completely freed from these relics of feudalism.

But this agrarian revolution could not be fully fruitful unless you, our peasants, were provided also with the benefits of modern sciences, particularly those relating to agriculture and health. With a view to carrying to your doors the advances of science and technology, 55 Community Projects were launched during the last year on the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. Every new measure takes some time to make its appeal to the popular mind and it is to be hoped that our people have begun to

appreciate their significance and render all the co-operation and help expected of them I am quite confident that as time passes and as our field workers gather experience, they will be able to serve you, our village people, with ever-increasing success Thus, a silent and peaceful revolution is passing over the countryside and I hope that when it is completed, it will have beneficially transformed the life of our people to no less a degree than any other revolution ever did in any part of the world and opened out a way for countrywide extension of such schemes

There has been silent but steady progress in the expansion and improvement of our transport, industrial and irrigational systems during the last year Such inaccessible parts as Kutch have now been connected to the main Railway system of our country Steady improvement continues to be made in the position of locomotives and rolling stock not only by imports from abroad but also by their manufacture within the country itself More amenities have been provided for passengers of smaller means Similarly, our industrial production has been growing The production of sugar, cloth, cement and steel has increased and we have succeeded in making larger quantities of these available for the consumption of the people In the matter of production of jute and cotton also we have made a great headway towards self-sufficiency

Nature has been unkind to us and there have been successive failures of monsoon in important tracts of our land and the crops have dried up for want of water Indeed this failure of rains has even affected the level of sub-soil water in these tracts and people there had difficulty of even obtaining drinking water Besides, in several places floods and cyclones have caused quite a great damage to crops and property All these natural calamities have compelled us to import food from other countries at prices not wholly of our choice During the year under review, however, on the whole the position has eased considerably and we have been able to relax controls in many places without any public detriment and to the great satisfaction of the people

at large. We also hope that imports of foodgrains in the year just commencing will be on a much smaller scale than last year.

The solution of the problem of rehabilitation of refugees has also made considerable headway. The examination of the claims of the refugees from West Pakistan is nearing completion and the evaluation of the property in the evacuee pool is also being proceeded with. We have been trying to negotiate with Pakistan about the settlement of evacuee property but unfortunately all our efforts in this direction have not been fruitful so far. But the same measure of progress cannot be claimed about the rehabilitation of refugees from East Pakistan. The idea of introduction of the passport system between India and Pakistan at the latter's instance also led to an increased exodus of refugees from East Pakistan and so the problem on that side has somewhat increased in dimensions. But we are determined to spare no efforts for their relief and rehabilitation.

True to our interest and traditions we kept up our efforts for international peace during the last year as well. We tried to find a *via media* on the Korean question, but unfortunately our effort has not been attended with success so far. We do believe that the world has reached a stage in its economic and cultural development where differences between nations can and should be solved by peaceful negotiation and where war would prove disastrous to all, and our humble efforts in that behalf are being continued.

It is with this belief in peace and goodwill to other peoples that we have kept ourselves aloof from all military alignments with any other nation or bloc of nations. Naturally we may not appreciate any move which may have the effect of drawing the danger of war nearer to this sub-continent.

It is really a matter of regret to us that our differences with Pakistan have not yet been settled and that the problem of Kashmir still hangs fire.

Thus, the year that has rolled by has witnessed steady

progress in all spheres of our national life. In fact, it may be said that it has witnessed the close of the post partition era and we are now on the threshold of a new era of national reconstruction and regeneration. The symbol of this future is our Five Year Plan which has been finalized by the Planning Commission and approved by our Parliament. It is a bold attempt to make the most economic use of our national and manpower resources to overcome the economic lag in our life which the recent past has bequeathed to us.

I am sure that everyone of you feel that the paramount necessity of ours is the immediate increase in our national income. This can be done only if we sink our differences, ideological and regional, and devote ourselves whole heartedly and enthusiastically to this supreme task. Its realisation would tax all our resources and energies and we have not a moment to lose. It may well be that some of you may not be satisfied with the targets fixed by the Plan or may have honest differences about the methods proposed. In a democratic society such differences about approach and objectives of any policy or plan would always be there. But these differences do not and should not imply that any of us should withhold his or her co operation from the implementation of a policy or plan accepted by a vast majority of the chosen representatives of our people.

Our future and fate depend on how we pull together for the realisation of all our objectives. We have to answer the call that is made on us. We can and should do so in a spirit of utter dedication to the service of India and humanity. Let me hope that tomorrow you will re dedicate yourselves to this great mission and thus fulfil your lives and destiny. May God bless you all.

True Builders of New India

TODAY WE ARE completing four years of the life of our Republic. On the eve of its anniversary, I send my greetings and best wishes to all my countrymen. During the last four years we have been celebrating this occasion appropriately by holding public meetings and dedicating ourselves to the service of the nation. I feel that this is also a fitting occasion for looking back and recapitulating past events with a view to assessing our efforts and seeing how far we have moved towards our cherished goal of making the common people inhabiting this country happier. The object is not to criticise any one but merely to know where exactly we stand today, because this knowledge is bound to be of help to us in the direction of our future efforts.

Let us take first of all the food situation. It is indeed gratifying that during the year which has gone by, we have made distinct improvement in the production of food. Our efforts, spread over the past several years, for growing more food and for bringing more and more land under the plough have at long last started bearing fruit. The production of nearly every foodstuff has gone up, as a result of which Government were able to effect a substantial reduction in the imports of foodgrains from overseas. Decontrol of coarse foodgrains recently ordered by Government is a proof of the present easier situation and of the increase in production. It is probable that as a result of decontrol of coarse foodgrains, their prices may fluctuate for some time, but I am sure before long they will have found their own level and the commodity market will stabilize.

Our First Five Year Plan for the all-round development and progress of the country is proceeding apace. Under this Plan, work on the river valley projects and other schemes

of vast magnitude is in progress. One of these projects known as Kakrapara Dam Project in Gujarat, was completed a few months ago. It is hoped that more than six lakh acres of land will be irrigated with the water made available by the construction of this dam. Sufficient progress has been made in respect of the Tungabhadra Project as well and the dam for storing the water of the river is already completed. Similarly, the Mayurakshi Project for Bengal, the Damodar Valley Project for Bihar and Bengal, the Bhakra-Nangal Project for the Punjab, PEPSU, etc., and the Hirakud Project for Orissa—all of these may be said to be in an advanced stage of execution. In fact, the Mayurakshi Project has already started giving its benefits to the region concerned. Another two or three similar projects which were not included originally in the Five Year Plan are also under Government's active consideration. Principal among them is the Kosi River Project.

During the year under review, we have had to face calamitous floods and their after effects. Widespread damage was caused by floods in Assam, Andhra and particularly in Bihar. Besides providing the maximum possible relief to the affected areas, Government are anxious to find a permanent solution of this recurring problem. It is only by constructing dams and controlling the waters of these rivers which are flooded every year and by adopting measures for improving drainage that this problem can be solved. Plans are being formulated for this purpose. When they are taken in hand and implemented, it is hoped that not only would floods be averted but the stored waters would also be utilized for the purpose of irrigation.

Whatever little we have been able to achieve so far through the Five Year Plan gives us great hope for the future. When the Plan is fully implemented, there will be an all round increase in production. In addition to the great increase in acreage under irrigation a good deal of power will also be available which will not only break the monotony of our villagers, but also increase the potentialities for large as also small industries. While Government are

making an all-out effort to implement this Plan at the cost of hundreds of crores of rupees, it is the bounden duty of every Indian, high or low, to extend his or her full co-operation in the accomplishment of this great task.

It will not be out of place to mention here the Community Project Scheme on which work is going on in the countryside. This scheme was started in October 1952 in 55 selected rural centres. Luckily, I had the opportunity of visiting a few of these centres last March and April. I was very happy to observe in these centres that the project had stirred the imagination of the village folk and roused their enthusiasm. They have been able to do a good deal of solid work. Under the Community Project Scheme people have voluntarily constructed link roads, dug wells for the procurement of drinking water cleaned tanks and village ponds, improved the production of fish, increased the production of foodgrains by sowing seeds of improved quality and by using manure, opened schools for children's education and started hospitals for the sick. These small projects have come quite handy to the villagers who have evinced keen interest in them, particularly because they are able to see the outcome of their efforts so quickly. As a result of this scheme, the whole atmosphere in our villages has become surcharged with constructive activity. To extend the scope of this useful work, Government have decided to start the Community Project Scheme in another 55 centers.

The Government of India have also set up a Board for encouraging cottage industries, specially the Khadi industry. People interested in cottage industries and having sufficient experience and knowledge of their working have been appointed to this Board. Government have also agreed to subsidise these industries. It is hoped that as a result of this step, cottage industries will receive a great impetus.

I would like to mention here the *Bhoomidan* movement started by Acharya Vinoba Bhave. Although the Government have no direct connection with this movement, yet its great potentialities in solving the problem of equitable distribution

of land and effecting a revolutionary change in the attitude of the people towards it cannot but interest every one. For remedying the present maldistribution of land among cultivators, it is altogether a novel move, a move which is perfectly in keeping with the traditions of this country and the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi.

While reviewing the events of the past year, we cannot forget the creation of a separate Andhra State. The people of Andhra had been agitating for it for many years past. Now that this demand has been met, let me hope our Andhra brothers will seize the opportunity to make a united effort for ameliorating the condition of the people of their newly-created State. The demand for redistribution and reorganisation of States has been insistent for some time. The Government have announced the appointment of high powered Commission to go into this question. Let me hope that as a result of the efforts of this Commission a satisfactory solution will have been found of all the controversial issues, consistent with the unity, solidarity and safety of India.

The Government set up another Commission last year for inquiring into and suggesting ways and means of improving the conditions of what are called backward people, so as to bring them into line with other people and for preparing a comprehensive list of such people. It is in the interest of all of us that every national of this country should have equal opportunity to develop and progress. This is enjoined not only by our Constitution but also by our age long tradition. Our plans for reconstruction should, therefore, be so broad based as to benefit each and every citizen of this Republic.

I am glad that displaced persons in our country have now started getting compensation in lieu of property left by them in Pakistan. It is a huge undertaking. Nevertheless, Government have agreed to provide compensation to the best of its resources.

As before, this year also our country had a prominent

role to play in international affairs, Our efforts to end the war in Korea have been in keeping with the Indian policy of helping attainment of peace and we are naturally happy that our efforts in that direction have been appreciated by many a foreign nation. When the hostilities in Korea came to an end as a result of the cease-fire agreement, we were asked to be a member of the Neutral Nations Commission to help in the solution of the question of prisoners of war, and to take charge of prisoners, pending repatriation. Howsoever arduous or thankless the task was, we undertook to do it and have tried to discharge this duty to the best of our ability. We look upon it as a unique opportunity for our armed forces to have been given such an assignment in a foreign land in the interest of peace and international goodwill. The election of Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit as President of the General Assembly of the U.N.O. is also a matter of legitimate pride for India and the women of the world, since she is the first woman to be called upon to hold that high office.

Notwithstanding all this, we cannot afford to be complacent or rest on our oars. There is so much which still remains to be done for the well-being of our people. We are pledged to establish a Welfare State in India. It is the duty of such a government to raise the standard of living of the people in its charge and to meet their basic needs. To achieve this is not easy, and necessarily takes time. Now-a-days we hear about the problem of unemployment, specially among the educated classes in towns. The Government are fully conscious of it and are adopting measures to tackle it. Our country is so big that no Government with the best of intentions can grapple with this problem successfully unless the people also lend their willing support and co-operation to its policies.

If India gets a good name at home or in the comity of nations, it will ultimately redound to the credit of our people. It is the people who are the backbone of a nation. A nation acquires the capacity to tide over difficulties from the character and high-mindedness of its people. You, the

people of India, are truly the builders of the new India that is to be. Its future will depend on your determination, sacrifice and devotion. I fervently hope that you will ever strive to make India a happy and prosperous country.

Ushering in a Welfare State

I SEND MY greetings and best wishes to all my countrymen on the fifth anniversary of our Republic, which we are going to celebrate tomorrow. It is for us a solemn occasion when we must look back in a spirit of thanksgiving and humility while viewing our success or achievement, and in a spirit of forbearance and resolve in case of failures or shortcomings. This year this day has a significance of its own. It was on this day just 25 years ago when to symbolise implementation of the nation's resolve to win freedom, Independence Day was for the first time celebrated all over the country - in cities and towns no less than in villages and hamlets. Since then we have succeeded not only in securing national freedom and framing and promulgating our Constitution, but also in establishing a Sovereign Democratic Republic. It is thus an occasion on which, besides being happy and joyous, we must do a bit of introspection and judge ourselves without any mental reservations.

Let us carry our thoughts back to the day when we declared our country a Republic. We have undoubtedly made remarkable progress with our various development plans. But have we freed all our people from poverty, want and misery? We have met with a measure of success in controlling the forces of nature and taming them for the

betterment of our people's lot. But we cannot forget that devastating floods visited parts of India a few months ago, disrupting communications and inflicting heavy damage on the people of those areas. We have certainly made headway with our plans for mass literacy and eradication of disease, though ignorance and ill-health still stalk many parts and sections of the country. About our determination to forge ahead with our schemes for the welfare of our people, there can be no manner of doubt. Nor need we be dissatisfied with the nation's efforts to realise them. If, nevertheless, the results to date are not as startling as the schemes envisage, it is only because the malady is in the process of being treated. It takes time to build up a nation. After all, it is only the fifth anniversary of our Republic and five years are but a short period in the history of an ancient people like us.

Let us now briefly review the principal events of the year which is closing today, and see how we have fared in respect of our schemes and plans of development.

If I were asked to sum up the events of the outgoing year in a sentence, I should like to say that in accordance with the Directive Principles laid down in our Constitution, we have started mobilising the resources of the country in a manner which if not self-evident, is at least indicative that the foundations of a Welfare State are being laid. The resolve that we expressed and the claims which we made in past years, have now begun to shape, so that it is not difficult now to foresee whether the nation is going and how we shall stand, say, ten or fifteen years hence.

Work has continued apace on the big river valley projects, one of which, the Bhakra-Nangal Project, has already started giving valuable water and electric energy to parts of the Punjab, PEPSU and Rajasthan. The Damodar Valley Corporation Project started supplying electricity some time ago, and like the Hirakud and the Chambal and other big projects, it has shown great progress in various directions. Now that the first phase of the Bhakra-Nangal Project is completed, it is becoming clear what far-reaching changes

these huge undertakings will bring about on their completion. The partial implementation of one or more of those projects has served to give us an idea of the extent to which our resources will be developed and the country's rural economy revolutionised by them.

At long last the Kosi, the River of Sorrow, which this year too lived up to its evil reputation, is going to be tamed out of its turbulence and vagaries. We have already gone beyond the blueprint stage and taken in hand the work in right earnest. It is hoped that large-scale voluntary help of the people of the area will be available and utilized in the execution of this project. When this experiment succeeds, we shall have learnt a new lesson in the handling of big projects and the use of India's vast manpower resources.

Rapid strides in the field of industrialisation, further stepping up of production and a rise in the per capita income of the country have been some of the salient features of the year under reference. Along with industrialisation, efforts have been and are being made to balance production and employment through giving proper encouragement to cottage and small scale industries. It is now recognised on all hands that the tide of ever growing unemployment has to be stemmed, if the Indian masses are to be freed from a feeling of frustration. In this direction, cottage industries can play a valuable part and offer fruitful part-time or whole time employment to a large number of people. For this reason provision is going to be made in the Second Five Year Plan for reviving old small-scale and cottage industries and giving encouragement to the existing ones.

Our success in the field of external relations has been even more pronounced. The policy of what I may be permitted to call active and purposeful neutrality, which in actual effect means that we look upon no country as our enemy and no people as hostile, has given us opportunities of doing our little bit in the cause of world peace. We feel happy and thankful that in the comity of nations India's prestige is so high. We have willingly shouldered the

responsibility of heading the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Indo-China, where our men are grappling to the best of their ability with local problems, pending elections in that country. We stand for peaceful negotiations for the settlement of disputes, national or international. I am very happy to say that the solution of the problems of French possessions in India was arrived at in an atmosphere of peace and goodwill. It is a significant instance of the success of peaceful methods. Unfortunately, our efforts for solving a similar problem in respect of Portuguese possessions in India have not made much headway. Let me hope Portugal will see the justice of the claim to freedom of the residents of the territory in its possession and take a leaf out of the British and French Government's book.

As the year closes, we find a pleasant change in our relations with our nearest neighbour, Pakistan, for whom we have nothing but the best of wishes. That change is symbolised by the presence in our midst of the head of that State to witness at our invitation the celebrations of the Republic Day at considerable personal inconvenience to himself.

This year, which will be noted for our important contacts with foreign countries, brought quite a few distinguished visitors to India. Among them, I might mention Marshall Tito, President of Yugoslavia, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, the Prime Minister of Ceylon and the Prime Minister of Indonesia. It was our privilege to have received these great leaders. We were also fortunate in having Cultural Missions from Soviet Russia, China and Afghanistan all of which gained great popularity among our people. There can be no doubt about the utility of such visits and exchange of Cultural Mission among nations.

While we stand by the ideals of the United Nations as ever before, we think mutual consultations among nations of different continents to discuss common problems are not incompatible with the aims or the ideals of that

great organisation. The nations of Asia and Africa are proposing to meet at a Conference in Indonesia for discussing such problems among themselves.

Great as all these tasks are, they only help us to feel self-reliant and keep ready to march forward. But there is no occasion for self-complacency. This is only the beginning of the new era which we are pledged to bring about.

India needs the goodwill, co-operation and help of each one of her nationals for fulfilling the great tasks we have taken upon ourselves. There is enough evidence of the feeling of self-reliance and hope among the people who have full faith in the destiny of their country. All these are welcome signs.

I would end this address with a word of cheer for the down-trodden, backward and physically handicapped among us. Goaded by our solemn pledges and inspired by the lofty ideals for which India has stood through the ages and of which Mahatma Gandhi did so much to remind us, India is determined to bring about a true Welfare State, in which not only does every citizen enjoy equal rights and quality of opportunity in all spheres of life, but is also expected to do his duty by the country and the people. May this ideal for which we are striving be our pole star to guide us and to inspire us is my prayer today.

A Long Way to Go

ON THE AUSPICIOUS occasion of the sixth anniversary of our Republic, let me once again offer my greetings and good wishes to my countrymen. For all of us it is a national festival. On this day of rejoicing, we look at ourselves and our country and feel, as it were, the process of growth and

development through which India has been passing. Infinitesimally short, this period of six years means a lot for us, because during these years we have strained and toiled to carry forward the task with which our Constitution has charged us, by trying to translate into action the Directive Principles contained in it. I know, one of the youngest of republics though we are, India is one of the oldest among nations. We naturally feel happy and grateful to Providence when, by virtue of our efforts to establish a Welfare State at home and to follow a policy of peace and goodwill in relation to other nations of the world, our successes are ascribed to the quality of mellowness which our nation has developed through the ages. It is at once a rare privilege and a heavy responsibility to have a distinguished past and to seek to live up to the time-honoured principles enunciated by the ancients, on the one hand, and, on the other, to so mould our present and our future as to come up to what conditions of the modern scientific age demand. We in India are thus the inheritors of a great past and aspirants to an equally great future and the willing and devoted builders of it. Let, therefore, every citizen of the Indian Republic not only rejoice today for he or she can, without doubt, claim a share in whatever we may have been able to achieve during these six years, but also resolve once again to dedicate himself or herself to the service of what we aim at, which is no less than the establishment of a happy and prosperous *Bharat*.

When we look back and have a bird's-eye view of the main events of these years, the overall feeling is that of satisfaction, though it is tempered with the feeling that we have merely made a beginning and that we have yet to go a long way towards banishing poverty and ignorance and getting the better of want and poverty, ignorance and disease.

Nature, in all its glory, has again served to remind us of its ferocious temper and unpredictable ways. During this year, hardly any part of India remained unaffected by the fury of floods. The very rivers which have been the subject-

matter of the thoughts of our planners and engineers, swelled in spite bringing vast tracts of land under water. In Assam and West Bengal in the East, in Madras and Andhra in the South and in Bihar, UP, the Punjab and PEPSU in the North, we witnessed the devastating excursions of flood waters, turning green fields, scattered hamlets and busy town streets into lakes. Delhi itself, the Capital of our Republic, was not immune from calamitous floods. For days and days water kept rising in the Jamuna and overawed citizens kept an uneasy watch as the water level touched and crossed the danger point. The Union Government and the Governments of the respective States, I am glad to say, left nothing undone to provide relief to the sufferers. Efforts are continuing even now to rehabilitate flood victims. As for preventive measures or a permanent remedy against floods, a long view has to be taken of the matter. The Planning Commission is fully seized of the situation and may be depended upon to give sufficient priority to flood control as one of the aspects of our river valley and hydro-electric projects.

Having referred to the Planning Commission, let me also say that the draft of the Second Five Year Plan is almost ready and is receiving final touches in consultation with the State Governments and other interests concerned. The developments in various spheres which the Second Five Year Plan is expected to achieve are, indeed, impressive. The successful implementation of the First Five Year Plan, resulting in nearly all of the agricultural, industrial and social welfare goals having been reached, inspires faith among the people about the success of the Second Plan. Among other things, health and education are going to get higher allocations in the Second Five Year Plan, making improvement and expansion in the available service possible.

We grow now enough food to feed our population, and also put aside something for reserves. Besides generating sufficient power to electrify thousands of villages in various States, as a result of the new projects which have already

started working, eight million new acres of land have been brought under irrigation. Thanks to the Community Project Scheme and the National Extension Service, the development programme in the countryside is proceeding apace. Thousands of trained workers spread in about 1,00,000 villages are grappling with problems like land improvement, education, public health, communications, etc., in widespread and far-flung areas of the country. Our national per capita income has also risen by about 3 per cent a year during the period of the First Plan.

I do not mean to suggest that we have done enough to meet the challenge of poverty and unemployment. I know that dealing with the problem of unemployment successfully calls for more concerted efforts on a national scale. To this question also the Planning Commission has devoted fullest attention and has been holding consultations about it with officials and public men throughout the country.

In the field of industrialization, we have been able to maintain the rate of progress of the previous years. Not only has production been stepped up by establishing industries, but setting up of additional plants, particularly for the production of steel, has also been taken up. A few months ago, the first Indian factory to manufacture newsprint and pulp went into production. The Perambur Railway Carriage Factory was also opened lately by our Prime Minister.

The Second Five Year Plan aims at giving greater importance to what may be best described as small-scale or cottage industries and it is hoped that such industries will give great encouragement not only to our handicrafts but also go a considerable way towards solving the tremendous problem of unemployment.

While we have tried to cater to the material needs and requirements of a modern State and its vast and growing population, we have not failed to give encouragement to fine arts and our Akademies are already going ahead in rendering assistance to those who try to lighten the tedium

of life and make it not only pleasanter but also loftier

As in previous years, during the year under review also, our foreign policy has been acclaimed in many foreign countries as one of the major contributory factors making for peace in the world. The policy of peaceful co-existence and non-involvement in war, which our Prime Minister has been so ably advocating, has this year won more adherents in Asia and Europe. It is not in an expansionist spirit that I have mentioned it. One should feel happy if the sphere of the areas pledged to the principles of peaceful co-existence or *Panchsheel* widens so as to include in it as many countries as possible.

Following in the wake of Shri Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Soviet Russia, the Russian Prime Minister and the Secretary of the Supreme Soviet were good enough to pay a visit to our country. We are glad that His Majesty King Saud Bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia also visited India in response to our invitation. He was the first Head of an Arab State to have visited this country. Thanks to our foreign policy and to the efforts of those who represent India in other countries, our stock in the comity of nations is as high as ever. The responsibility to keep it at that level so that India is looked upon as a pillar of peace and a friend of all nations rests on all the people of India whether living at home or in lands overseas.

I share with all my countrymen the feeling of sorrow that all our appeals and suggestions for a peaceful solution of the problem of Goa have hitherto made no effect on the Portuguese Government and the authorities there have resorted to force to suppress the natural aspirations of the people to enjoy the bracing air of freedom. Let me hope even now Portugal will see the light of reason and agree to cede Goa to India, to whom geographically, historically and culturally it belongs.

Let us, one and all, dedicate ourselves once again to the great cause of establishing a Welfare State in India and making our contribution of help maintain peace in the world.

Impact of Planning on Nation's Prosperity

ON THE AUSPICIOUS occasion of the seventh anniversary of our Republic, I feel happy to offer my greetings and good wishes to my countrymen. On this day it is customary to rejoice and look back in order to assess the achievements of the year that has passed and also to prepare ourselves for still greater tasks in the coming year in a spirit of dedication and cautious self-confidence. For a nation occupied with a programme of reconstruction covering all aspects of life, such an opportunity is of utmost importance. It helps us in measuring our capacity as against the jobs to be undertaken during the year that begins today.

We all know that our goal is the establishment of a Welfare State in this country. Let us see how far we have advanced on that path. Soon after we became masters of our destiny, we decided to follow the pattern of planned economy. In course of time we launched our First Five Year Plan which was fully implemented last year, yielding place to the Second Five Year Plan, the working of which is now in operation. The targets of production and progress fixed in the First Plan have been luckily achieved, in certain cases the results being an improvement on our targets. The achievements of this Plan are now beginning to come to surface so that the people can see and feel for themselves that the country is moving forward. Some of the river valley projects, work on which has been going apace for years, have been completed partially. Mighty rivers like the Sutlej, the Damodar, the Mahanadi and the Tungabhadra, which have long been associated with devastating floods, have at last been dammed. Their waters rushing into the newly-laid canals are a symbol of hope for the people of the respective regions. The same can be said about the power

generated from plants attached to these projects Cheap electricity turning the wheels of industry and illuminating the dark countryside is in the eyes of the common folk the first tangible fruit of our nation-building programme To the generality of people it is an indication of the potentialities of our planning

It is, however, in the countryside, in India's out-of-the-way and far-flung villages that a silent, but real, revolution has been taking place Our villages today are in a state of ferment The National Extension Service and the Community Development Programme have widened the mental horizon of our village folk who are lending full help and co operation to the administration in changing the face of rural India As the nation-building work progresses, villagers are shedding old prejudices and learning to help themselves with new implements and fresh ideas It is the prosperity of this section of the community which is our foremost hope, because among themselves the villagers account for about three fourths of India's population even today

In respect of industrialisation also we have made sufficient progress during the year Two new major steel plants are being erected and a programme of increasing the all-round industrial output of the country is under way Along with the establishment of heavy industries, we are also reviving and giving encouragement to small-scale industries These latter industries are easier to set up, and manage and, what is far more important, they have great potentialities for providing employment to large numbers of people The importance of this work cannot be exaggerated in view of the high incidence of unemployment in our country, particularly among the educated sections of the society Putting out young men on to industries which, in order to produce more do not have to resort to labour-saving devices, is the best way of improving the prospects of employment in India It is for this reason that the Government have been devoting special attention to the needs of small-scale industries and have made a much

bigger provision for them in the Second Five Year Plan than could be made in the First Plan.

One of the highlights of last year was the world-wide celebrations in connection with the 2500th anniversary on the *Mahaparinirvana* of Lord Buddha. India as the land of Buddhism, where the Lord lived and preached his gospel and from where the *bhikshus* went forth in all directions to spread the benign message of the Buddha, was naturally the centre of these celebrations. The various public meetings, exhibitions and seminars held throughout the country in this connection have given an impetus to Indian art and thought which had already started surging through the impact of the forces released by our freedom. It is gratifying to see that side by side with our march to economic prosperity, there are signs of a renaissance focussing attention on our great heritage in the domains of art and literature.

While we can claim that all that is possible for husbanding our material resources in order to increase the nation's wealth and for reviving our age-old traditions of art and learning is being done, we particularly feel happy that the march of democracy continues unhindered in India. Beset though we were and still are with all manners of problems that a vast country determined to raise the standard of living of its teeming millions has to contend with, we held our first general elections five years ago. That witnessed the world's largest democracy going to the polls. We are now preparing for the next general elections in accordance with the provisions of our Constitution. The success with which we held the last elections and with which we hope to conduct the forthcoming elections, will do us credit, so that even our worst critics will agree that democracy is taking firm roots in India.

We feel happy that in the light of our principles and deep-rooted convictions we are able now and then to make our humble contribution to the maintenance of peace, amity and goodwill among nations. The doctrine of *Panchsheel*, based on non-aggression, non-interference and peaceful co-

existence has found wider acceptance among nations of the world during the last year. It is, indeed, fortunate that the outbreak of hostilities of Egyptian soil, which came as a grave threat to world peace was localised and later brought to an end through the efforts of the United Nations and its peace loving members.

In recent months we have had the privilege of receiving in this country, His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, the President of Syria, the Prime Minister of China and Their Holinesses the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.

Happy as we feel to see that the country is moving forward on the road to prosperity, we cannot afford to be complacent. The road leading to the valley of progress is necessarily zigzag with all the ups and downs associated with a difficult terrain. United by the bond of common objective and achievement we must strive hard till the goal is reached. In this great task of nation building the co-operation of every citizen, high or low, will count at every step. Let us resolve on this memorable day to dedicate ourselves to this work of ushering in the desired era of welfare, happiness and prosperity in this country.

Let me once again send you, men and women of India, my greetings and all good wishes on this day of rejoicing.

Implement Plan with Redoubled Effort

ON THIS DAY, the eighth anniversary of our Republic, I send my greetings to all my countrymen. Today we have completed eight years of our existence as a Sovereign Republic and are entering the ninth year with renewed

Broadcast to the Nation on January 25, 1958

hope and enthusiasm. A day of national rejoicing as it is, every one of us should observe it in a spirit of happiness and good cheer. At the same time it is a day of dedication when every Indian citizen should take the pledge of service of the nation and renew his resolve to contribute his or her mite to the building up of the India of our dreams. It is on such occasions when the passing out and the incoming years meet that one is apt to review the happenings of the year which is ending and welcome in a spirit of hope and preparedness the year which is to begin. These two processes are in a way interdependent and indissolubly linked with each other.

As all of you know, the principal feature of our life these ten years has been a collective endeavour on a nation-wide scale to reconstruct our economy, to improve our social conditions and to enrich our cultural life. Though for better living progress in all these directions is essential, it is economic development which has claimed first priority. Eradication of poverty, the spread of education so that ignorance and illiteracy are liquidated and the provision of minimum civic amenities and domestic comforts—all these call for material resources without which the urge to progress may get blunted and popular enthusiasm chilled. Therefore, those responsible for shaping our policies have given due place to the development of the nation's material resources in our programmes. For the achievement of this object and in order to raise the level of India's prosperity we have resorted to modern planning. The successful implementation of the First Five Year Plan and the results achieved therefrom have been a source of encouragement to us. Nearly in all spheres we were not only able to reach the targets but in some cases actual production even exceeded them. With redoubled confidence and vigour we launched the Second Five Year Plan last year. As is perhaps inherent in the phase of development through which we are now passing, we have come up against difficulties here and there. These difficulties, far from discouraging us should be, and actually have been, a force providing us to still greater effort. I am glad to say that in face of the

difficulty caused by the gap in the required outlay and the available resources the whole nation has responded to the Government's call to co operate with official measures. We are determined to find a way out, and God willing, we shall succeed in implementing the Plan.

Let me also refer on this occasion to scarcity conditions prevailing in certain areas affected by drought and subsequent failure of crops. Though we know that in our agriculture chance plays a big part and that natural calamities which can affect adversely the outcome of the cultivator's efforts are not always unexpected, yet I am not inclined to gloss over the grave food situation in the country. The very idea of having to import large quantities of foodgrains from foreign countries piques us and gives a setback to our planning as a whole, besides putting a terrible strain on our foreign exchange resources. Self sufficiency in food is our basic requirement without achieving which our projects in other spheres can hardly carry conviction with the common man. It is a task to which every Indian must address himself. Those employed in agriculture must do their utmost to get the maximum yield from land. I believe that agricultural production can be greatly enhanced if we diligently and intelligently apply ourselves to it, because our land is fertile and steps are being taken to provide facilities for irrigation, improved seeds and manures. If our farmers make proper use of these facilities and use their inherited experience and intelligence, the shortage of food can easily be removed. Those who follow other avocations have to observe austerity in the use of foodgrains, changing their food habits, where necessary, so that the needs of the various regions in India can be met and properly adjusted. Our target should be to build up sufficient reserves of foodgrains so that we can meet all situations and in case of failure of crops for one reason or another we may be able to do without importing grains from other countries.

In the face of difficulties and hardships we have been able to make progress in other notable spheres. It is indeed gratifying that we were able to hold the second general

elections, sending again the world's largest electorate to the polls. The manner in which these elections were held and the way in which administrative machinery at the Centre and in the States has been functioning in the country, should gladden the hearts of all those interested in the progress of democracy in the world. Whatever one might think of India as a whole or of any of our problems, the one thing which is beyond the pale of doubt is the fact that we are pledged to follow the democratic way of life and nothing can deflect us from our resolve to follow this path we have chosen for ourselves. We are determined to give effect to our decision to reconstruct our society and that in a way not incompatible with the liberty and dignity of the individual. The good of the community as a whole is no doubt a supreme consideration, but the individual forming an integral part of the community is guaranteed certain Fundamental Rights upheld by our Constitution and sanctified by our age-old traditions.

I want to appeal to my fellow countrymen to keep abreast of the developments in the world and the great need of their adjusting themselves to them. The world today is witnessing great events in the realm of science and other spheres of knowledge.

Vast vistas are opening up and knowledge and resources are being placed in the hands of man which can add infinitely to his material prosperity all the world over, if only he knows how to utilise them in the proper way for the benefit of all and not of any limited sections of humanity. Herein comes the necessity of understanding and accepting those moral and spiritual values which alone can conquer distrust, selfishness and fear and let in an era of peace.

No one who fails to respond to these developments with an open mind and in a scientific spirit can hope to play his part for the good of society at large and to his own advantage. Let us, therefore, pause and, coming out of old ruts and grooves, think of the great developments that are taking place in the wider world. These developments will inevitably result in bringing the various countries together,

and broadening human outlook on pain of total extinction in case of maladjustment with the latest scientific discoveries. We hope, and to the best of our capacity we are also striving, for the establishment of peace in the world so that all of these achievements could be used to humanity's advantage towards constructive ends. In fact this desire on our part has been the main feature of our foreign policy. We stand for peace and non aggression—objects which we believe can be achieved through the principle of co existence.

Once again I wish you all the best of luck and pray that the coming year may bring you greater happiness and prosperity and that each one of you may be able to contribute more to the well being of India as a whole.

Issues in Planned Economy

I TAKE THIS opportunity once again to talk to my countrymen, to greet them and offer them my best wishes on the eve of our Republic Day. It is the ninth Republic Day that we are celebrating and it is well to remember that our Republic is still young, but it is growing at a pace which fills our hearts with pride and gives not only to us but to our friends outside as well, a sense of satisfaction.

In these recent years we have seen the spectacle of a gigantic effort to mobilise the whole nation to develop its resources and to reconstruct its economic life. Despite handicaps and numerous difficulties, which planning in such a vast country as India of necessity involves, we have gone on and intend to go on from plan to plan till we have made sure that every citizen of the Indian Republic can

have a reasonable standard of living and enjoys a measure of social security. On the progress that we have made in this direction so far, we have been the recipients of compliments from many a foreign visitor and impartial critic. While this naturally makes us happy, we are only too conscious of the difficulties we have to contend against and the shortcomings we have to get over. Whenever, therefore, we allow our minds to wander and bring the affairs of the State within the purview of thought, both the sides of the picture emerge to view. Let us see how the situation stands.

During the year that is ending today I have had occasion to visit a few foreign countries. It pleases me a great deal to see that India is held in high esteem by the peoples and leaders of those countries. There is admiration for the manner in which we have conducted ourselves since the dawn of freedom. There may be several factors like our ancient heritage and our tremendous efforts in tackling the problems of economic reconstruction and industrialisation that have helped others to formulate their views about India, but I have no doubt in my mind that the biggest single factor that has been responsible for eliciting this appreciation abroad is our foreign policy. By many India is looked upon as a bulwark of peace and as a nation which stands for the progress and freedom of all nations, which recognises diversity in the pattern of ideologies and administrations and which at the same time believes that given mutual goodwill and tolerance, all these diverse patterns can co-exist. The fact that we are trying to solve our problems by well-recognised democratic methods adds to that appreciation.

I feel happy to say that this policy has won us friends and well-wishers in foreign lands. But at the same time it casts a heavy responsibility on all Indians at home and on those of our nationals living in foreign lands. We must see that in our thinking and our day-to-day behaviour we refrain from doing anything which may not conform to this policy of tolerance and co-existence. A nation's ideology and

policies are often judged from the behaviour of its nationals

Coming to things nearer home, it is well known and easily understandable that planned economy imposes great stresses and strains on the people. A nation in this respect is not different from a family unit. In order to plan a better future and to build up a happier life, both have to make sacrifices, undergo some strain and possibly some suffering. It may well mean dislocations and deprivations, but the idea of ultimate achievement sustains them, helping them to endure those sufferings willingly. If, therefore, our planning has imposed any such hardships on certain sections of our people, it is expected that in the larger interest of the nation and a brighter and happier future, these will be faced without demur.

What is of utmost importance is the spirit of sacrifice, the willingness to give voluntarily in the present in order to have more in the future through our own efforts. It would be wrong to imagine that austerity as a virtue belonged only to the past or that the spirit of sacrifice is not needed to build up a free nation. If anything, there is greater need for this spirit today than it was before when we were engaged in the struggle for freedom. It is my earnest request to all my countrymen, to all my brothers and sisters wherever they live, whether in towns or in the countryside, to ponder over the situation and ask themselves whether they have made or are willing to make their share of the sacrifice for the building of the India of our dreams.

The problem of food is a basic problem for all and specially for us. With our great traditions of agriculture going back to centuries and the capacity for work and shrewdness and intelligence of our people it is really a matter of shame and humiliation that we should have to look to other countries for food and spend hundreds of crores of rupees on importing it. Let every agriculturist realise that in increasing production and enhancing the yield per acre of land he is not only doing a great national service but also improving his own standard and thus combining and identifying national interest with his own. Once this

realisation comes it should not be difficult by intensive cultivation and the use of improved methods to raise the yield twofold and solve this difficult problem and become free from the everpresent ghost of hunger.

Brothers and sisters, I would ask you to pause and think of the great opportunity that has come your way and the responsibility that has devolved upon you. The task of raising a new edifice has been entrusted by fate to you, for you are the builders of a new India. Can any sacrifice be too great to see that you have done your duty and helped your nation, that has tasted the fruit of freedom after a long spell of foreign domination, to reach its destiny?

In the midst of national rejoicings, I have perhaps struck a different note, but truly speaking, the two are not at variance with each other. Rejoicings which flow from a sense of responsibility are truly rich and abiding. I wish you all the best of luck and prosperity in the coming year.

Message of Hope and Progress

LET ME GREET my countrymen on the eve of the tenth Republic Day and wish them good luck and happiness in the coming year. Every year we exchange greetings on this happy occasion and felicitate one another and also look around to see the state of the nation, its growing economy and its fast-developing resources. We have weighed these developments against our long-term plans and our cherished dreams to turn an under developed nation of teeming millions into a prosperous State in which every citizen, assured of life's essential needs, leads a reasonably happy life. The whole machinery of the State, nay, the entire

resources of the nation, are being mobilised to give shape to this ideal

Since we became free and took charge of the affairs of State we have remained mainly occupied with setting our house in order, that is to say, with dealing mostly with our internal problems, though, as is well known, we have throughout been following a foreign policy which we have thought to be the best for India. Respecting other nations' independence, cherishing friendly feelings for all peoples, firm belief in every country's freedom to live in the manner considered best by it, to abjure violence and aggression and to work for the maintenance of world peace these are some of the important elements in our foreign policy. This policy which came to be known as that of peaceful co existence has been subscribed to by good many other nations of the world.

Something has happened which threatens to strain our belief in these principles. One of our neighbours with whom our relations have throughout been friendly and who has been with us in propounding the theory of *Panchsheel*, has thought it fit to encroach on our frontiers and occupy fringes on the border areas falling within Indian territory. In the face of provocation and the rising popular resentment we have continued to rely on negotiation and settle whatever dispute there be in a peaceful and friendly manner. Our anxiety, however, to remain friendly and avoid resort to force has not so far evoked the desired appreciation from the other side. While hoping for the best, we have to be vigilant and united. Though our faith in peace and peaceful co existence remains unshaken as ever we cannot afford to ignore the fact that eternal vigilance is the price a nation pays for its freedom.

Side by side with meeting the requirements of defence necessitated by recent events, we are determined to spare no effort in implementing our big nation-building projects. Some of these projects have already been completed or are nearing completion. Work on others is proceeding according to schedule. During this year we had the Ganga Bridge

opened to traffic, linking North Bihar and Assam with South Bihar and West Bengal. Encouraged by this remarkable feat of engineering we now propose to span the mighty Brahmaputra near Gauhati, and our Prime Minister has laid the foundation of the new bridge only this month. Work on Bhakra, Nagarjunasagar, Chambal, Neyveli and Kundah hydro-electric projects continues to progress. The three major steel plants at Rourkela, Bhilai and Durgapur have begun functioning in part this year. These are expected to supply more than our present requirements of steel.

At one time during the year the food situation threatened to worsen, but the price level was soon brought down as a result of efforts to ease the supply situation and opening of foodgrain shops throughout the country. The situation since then has shown signs of improvement and there is reason to believe that this trend will receive further support from the present reassuring crop position and foreign imports to build up adequate reserves.

Brothers and sisters, I want you all to give a little thought to these momentous questions confronting our country. I need hardly tell you that they are receiving the best consideration at the hands of the leaders to whose care you have entrusted the affairs of the country, but in a democracy national questions are the concern of every citizen and everyone must apply himself or herself to them.

Once again I wish you all the best of luck and have pleasure in greeting you on this day.

Building a Better India

TOMORROW, THE INDIAN Republic enters into its twelfth year, and as I greet my countrymen on the eve of the great National Day, I am filled with joy and hope. Ours

Broadcast to the Nation on January 25, 1961.

is a very young Republic but we are an ancient people whose history goes back to thousands of years. Establishment of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India in 1950 is undoubtedly a great landmark in the history of this great land bound by the Himalayas in the North and the East and the wide seas in the South and the West.

These eleven years form but an infinitesimal part of the history of India but they are for us today of the utmost importance. For, it is a period in our history when we are busy laying the foundations—sound and secure—of a Democratic State of Socialist pattern, whose guiding principles are human dignity and freedom and in which poverty and ignorance are outlawed. Our concept of a Welfare State is one in which every citizen, without any distinction or discrimination, has a chance of honourable existence and of full growth.

It is to that end that all our planning is directed. The work that we are doing today and what we have done since Independence, is going to determine our future. Therefore, we must marshal all our resources, spiritual and material. And thus we cannot effectively do unless there is the silken thread of fellowship unifying and strengthening all our national endeavours. If we pride ourselves on the fact that we had attained a high degree of culture at a time when a large part of the world was passing through the Stone Age, we should also ask ourselves why we are, where we are today, while many of the erstwhile backward nations have laboured hard and gone ahead. Is it wise to be oblivious of the lessons of history? The darkest spots in our history have been those when our people lost a sense of proportion and attached undue importance to things that were secondary, in fact, petty and ignored the demands of the country. Let us not forget the lesson which our history teaches us and let us make sure that the causes which brought about our downfall do not operate in our national life today or ever again in future.

This year the Nation embarks on the Third Five Year Plan. We have, of course, achieved much in the last 12

years, but we have yet to go a long way before we can claim that we have given economic content to our freedom.

We, in India, are faced with many internal and external stresses and strains. We should take them as a challenge to our national will for survival and every year on this auspicious day, we should rededicate ourselves to the cause of the common man and to India's age-old mission of furthering the cause of peace, goodwill and friendship among nations.

The world—especially Asia and Africa—is changing with a somewhat baffling speed necessitating constant vigilance and adjustment. If life is a challenge and an adventure, living in an atomic age with all its perils and potentialities is a greater adventure. If man must survive the self-created dangers, he will have to make a departure from his old stand. A fresh sense of man's mission in this universe, a reassessment of values and a reaffirmation of faith in the *vishwatma*—the world spirit are the needs of the present time. Old patterns of thought and behaviour, individual, national and international call for revision and reconsideration. May be, they have to give place to new patterns in keeping with the spirit and temper of the new age of space travel.

Our task is great but so also can our national will be mighty. All we have to do is to inspire a sense of belonging, a sense of comradeship in our people. For, are we not engaged in the glorious adventure of building a better India of tomorrow—an India, which will count as a force for peace, progress, freedom and happiness for all mankind? A fresh dedication to the service of the country, an all India vision and a general social awareness are the imperative needs of today. Let us draw inspiration from our past achievements but let us also guard against old mistakes. And let us apply ourselves, heart and soul, to the task which awaits us. Let everyone feel that his personal contribution is as important as the collective effort for our national regeneration. And so, I should like to offer my greetings and sincere good wishes to my countrymen for a better and happier life.

We Can Only Live in Our Own Time

OUR HONoured PRESIDENT, Dr Rajendra Prasad, in spite of weak health has been gracious enough to send a message to the nation which I shall now read

On the happy occasion of our thirteenth Republic Day, I would like to greet all my countrymen and Indian nationals abroad I wish them happiness and the best of luck in the coming year Ever since the formation of our Republic in 1950, I have been addressing the people on this occasion year after year, but on account of indifferent health, just at present I have to content myself with offering them my best wishes I am happy that Dr S Radhakrishnan, our Vice-President, will be addressing the nation Familiar as our people are with his thought-provoking speeches, I am sure his address will inspire them

I hope and pray that the current year may continue to be a year of peace in the world and of prosperity for our people and the country

Our heartfelt prayers, it is needless to say, go out for the President's rapid recovery and restoration to health

May I join the President on this happy occasion in greeting our countrymen here and abroad and wishing them all a happy and useful year?

It is the first time that the people of Goa are joining the Republic Day celebrations Though a part of Indian society, they were politically separated for many years That separation has now ended I extend to them a special welcome

We will have the general elections next month and over 210 million voters are eligible to vote I have no doubt that

the candidates and the voters will act with dignity and decency and not yield to the pressures of caste and community. What counts is not so much victory or defeat as civilized behaviour.

We are in the first year of the Third Five Year Plan and our achievements this year are not inconsiderable and we have every hope that at the end of the Plan period our targets will be reached. Our progress is achieved by our men and women who are vital, capable, devoted, ready to sacrifice their personal interests for the public good. The Indian sections of the recent Industries Fair showed the marked advance we have made in many branches.

Our national income and per capita income have registered substantial increases as the result of the efforts of the last ten years. There is, however, no ground for complacency. Millions of our people still live in conditions which are far from satisfactory. The deaths due to cold and exposure reported in recent weeks are an indication of the vast work that lies ahead of us. Mother Earth out of her bounty gives freely to us all sunlight, air and water; in the same spirit, we should distribute our resources of food, clothing and shelter equitably. They should not be used to enslave fellow men or secure domination over the lives of others. We have to speed up the economic revolution that is now in progress if we are to make up for the neglect of centuries.

More important than the political and economic changes are the social ones. We cannot live two or three thousand years ago; we can live only in our own time. We cannot contract out of the present. We have to win freedom in our generation by vigilance in the face of social institutions which tend to enslave us. Our Constitution rightly repudiates the restrictions of caste and the practice of untouchability. If we are to weld together the different sections of our society into a homogeneous community, these provisions should be strictly enforced. We must fight prejudice by our example, defend social equality even in the face of persecution. By removing poverty and economic backwardness

from which many people suffer, we help to establish an equitable social order, a stable society Social justice is the basic condition for national cohesion

National integration can be achieved only by combating communal tendencies, caste discrimination, and developing national feelings We should not blast the hopes of the future by the hatreds of the past Our minds must shed their dead ideas even as a tree throws off its withered leaves

The perils facing our nation can be overcome and its latent possibilities realized only if we educate everyone to the full extent of his capacity It is not enough to increase the number of schools and colleges We must maintain high standards and impart knowledge in depth as well as in breadth We can save ourselves and help to save mankind if we maintain righteous standards and grow in wisdom and humanity

In the international sphere, we are in a period of tensions and anxieties Though the Cold War is still continuing, there has also been competition in the realm of science—in space flights, for example These adventures into outer space should induce in us a sense of humility and of the oneness of the tiny world in which we live We must dispel the mists of misunderstanding, the clouds of suspicion, by patient and determined effort to understand one another and end the war of nerves Harsh words, angry accusations do not help, however justified they may be There is so much goodwill and friendship in the heart of man whether he is an Asian or an African, a European or an American These require to be tapped High is the dignity of man, lofty his aspirations, deep and wonderful his comprehension of the marvellous world that he inhabits He can certainly reshape history

The prospect ahead of us is bright, only we should make ourselves the servants of the future If we have no cause to live for, we tend to live for ourselves and our lives become petty, trivial and futile Let us today dedicate ourselves to the building of a new India on moral foundations, and the making of a new world *Jai Hind!*



Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

(13 05.1962 to 13 05.1967)

A Year of Regeneration

FRIENDS ! ON THE eve of the fourteenth Republic Day, I should like to greet our countrymen at home and abroad and convey to them my best wishes for the future

In the stream of history the pronouncements of political leaders are of an ephemeral character. The archives of nations are filled with decrees, decisions and declarations which were meant to resound for decades, if not centuries, but were forgotten in a few months, if not weeks. Gandhiji's message, however, rings in our minds and hearts, though many of us have not the strength to carry it out in our lives. His insistence on truth and non violence has been the governing principle of our Constitution, which is directed to the achievement of the objectives of democratic freedom, social justice and fellowship among nations.

The State in a parliamentary democracy is not an end in itself. It is a means for the purpose of binding men together in a justly ordered social life. Strong public opinion should set itself against attempts to bring democratic processes into disrepute.

We have been striving our utmost to raise the living standards of our people. We are not satisfied with our achievements in this matter, considerable as they are. We are aware of the long distance that we have yet to traverse before we can reach the level of self-sufficiency in the production of foodgrains and the development of an industrial base so very essential for future progress. We are working for a planned development in agriculture and industry, and are engaged in large schemes of educational progress, improvement in health, sanitation and housing, especially in urban areas. We need large export savings as a source of vital necessity for our plans on defence and development. While we are grateful to the friendly countries which have

helped us with their experience, skill and assistance in working out our Plans, ultimately we have to depend on our own efforts. We need to develop our resources and achieve in a generation, if not in a decade, what other nations have taken centuries to accomplish.

In our relations with other nations it has been our endeavour to establish peaceful co-operation. Our policy of non-involvement in military blocs has helped us to foster fellowship among all nations, whatever their political and economic systems may be. In pursuance of this policy we did our best to establish cordial relations with our neighbour, China. Even as we were attempting to resolve our border differences through peaceful negotiations and proposing a conference for that purpose, China, in violation of the principles to which both our countries have subscribed, decided to change the boundary by resort to arms. The large-scale attack on our frontiers took us by surprise. On account of our traditional adherence to the methods of peace and the habits engendered by it, we were psychologically unprepared for meeting this sudden aggression.

Owing to the difficult terrain and numerical superiority of the Chinese, we suffered military reverses. These have opened our eyes to the realities of the situation. We are now aware of our inadequacies and are alive to the needs of the present and the demands of the future. The country has developed a new purpose, a new will. . .

The difficulties and dangers we are passing through, will, I hope, cleanse us and purge us of our smallness.

We are now taking steps to strengthen our defences. This cannot be achieved by mere wishful thinking or pious resolutions. It has to be worked out by an orderly succession of well-directed efforts and disciplined behaviour. We cannot afford to relax our efforts in building up defence forces adequate for the security of our country, with its size and population. The traditional valour and personal bravery of our troops are very high. When properly equipped and trained they will be one of the finest armies in the world.

The attack by China has demonstrated the remarkable unity of our people. The emotional upsurge can be stabilized at deeper levels, if we do not allow petty worries, selfish ambitions and incoherence to take hold of us.

Private and personal interests should not be permitted to prevail over national welfare. Our government, our economy, our education, should keep pace with modern standards of economy, efficiency and rectitude. Within the context of this development and discipline we have to bring about a transformation of our country. From ancient times, a democratic attitude of tolerance and understanding of other faiths and ways of life has grown up in the country. An ancient text says that men and women of India belong to different communities, worship different gods and practise different rites.

*bharatesu striyah pumso nanavarnah prakirtitah
nanadevarcane yuktah nanakarmani kurvate*

Among the devotees there is no distinction of caste, learning, beauty, birth, wealth, profession and the life.

nasti tesu jati vidya rupa kula dhana kriyadi bhedah¹

(In spite of occasional deviations and set backs, our people have held to this ideal.

Although the expenditure on defence is likely to be heavy, we should not neglect or postpone the projects and schemes in our Five Year Plans since they are essential for building up our strength and thus enabling our people to lead lives of dignity and freedom.

Our policy is one of peaceful settlement of international disputes though we are obliged to resist aggression when it occurs. Our resistance is to be carried out without ill will or hatred. Our faith in *ahimsa* does not mean cowardly submission to aggression. It is resistance to evil without violence in our minds or hatred in our hearts. While non-violence does not mean surrender to evil, it also requires that we should be ready to negotiate for an honourable

settlement if and when an opportunity arises.

This conflict with China does not in any way diminish our faith in the United Nations and the growth of a world community. We live in an age of the decline of the nation-State and the rise of a world society. All men are brothers, though nation-States sometimes seem to be hostile to one another. We have been striving, to the extent to which one nation can, to strengthen the United Nations and give it authority and power to protect small and weak nations from attacks by larger and stronger powers. We will continue in our endeavours to transform the United Nations into a world authority. Till this goal is reached, so long as there are nations which esteem and respect only military strength, we owe it to ourselves to give our people security to lead their lives unfettered by interference from outside.

We are convinced of the irrationality of war. We know that it does not settle disputes; but when our security is imperilled, when justice is violated, we are obliged to use force for defensive purposes. While individuals may adopt an attitude of complete abstention from the use of force in any circumstances, the State cannot adopt such a policy if it is to discharge its first duty to give protection to its citizens. Even States should ceaselessly strive with discipline and courage to narrow the scope for the use of force and to enlarge that for persuasion.

We do not wish to change our basic policies of democratic freedom, social justice and friendship among nations merely because military conflict is thrust upon us to our great sorrow. We will follow a policy of friendship to all nations and enmity towards none. We shall do everything in our power to clear up misunderstandings and suspicions with our neighbours without losing patience or hope. We shall not at any time, or in any circumstance, be tempted into a large-country or great-civilization complex. We know that national self-confidence is essential for survival, but we know also that national conceit is a source of irritation to others. By our every word and action we create a climate of friendliness or annoyance, and we should

be vigilant about what we say or do in regard to international questions

Nationalism and internationalism do not involve us in an either/or Internationalism is an overarching ideal which reconciles the national concepts that we have developed To this generation is given the responsibility and the opportunity to change the international situation and safeguard not only itself but the future generations for whom we hold the world in trust It is a race against time and we must win it It is our hope that the great nations of the world will turn back from the race in nuclear armaments and co operate in combating the enemies of humanity, poverty, ignorance and disease, and help to give a better life to all people by utilizing the enormous resources of science and technology

We are entering a new year which holds out new beginnings and new possibilities For every one of us it can be a year of regeneration, of renewal From the old past with its mistakes, sorrows and failures we can rise to a new state endowed with power and purpose, and radiant with the inspiration of a new ideal Let us strive to raise ourselves morally and spiritually, and work for the new order

Let Us Strengthen our Democracy

FRRIENDS' AS ANOTHER Republic Day approaches it gives me great pleasure to speak to our people at home and abroad and send them my warmest greetings and good wishes

The last few weeks have been for us a period of great concern The Prime Minister has not been keeping well,

Broadcast to the Nation on January 25 1964

though happily he is now making rapid progress. I know I speak on behalf of all our countrymen and friends of peace in the world in wishing him the speediest recovery so that we may continue to have his inspiring leadership.

This country has had the good fortune of having Jawaharlal Nehru's stewardship at one of the most critical periods in its history. The general development of the country in the years since freedom bears his impress.

He has brought a modern, secular and scientific outlook to our difficult and diverse problems and has indeed reflected the national purpose over these years. More than any one else our Prime Minister has helped to put us on the right track in our quest for national integration and orderly growth.

That we have still not attained the ideal he has set for us is borne out by the distressing events in Calcutta and neighbouring areas these last few weeks. Admittedly the provocation from across the borders of our country was there, but we are not being true to the moral and spiritual values transmitted to us from the past if we allow passions to get the better of us.

The twin means we have chosen for giving our citizens a fuller life are individual liberty and economic planning. In our democracy men of all faiths have the right to live in honour and harmony under the rule of law; the life and liberty of every citizen, irrespective of caste or creed, ought to be sacred to every other. Any departure from this is not only morally indefensible but politically dangerous; it weakens our internal unity at a time when the danger to our country from within is undiminished.

The Government can and will take every step necessary to put down antisocial behaviour, but the co-operation of the people is no less important if peaceful conditions are to be preserved, for such peace is the basis on which we could build our future.

Democracy does not believe in the infallibility of any

individual or group. It does not think that any particular party represents unblemished good, nor does it assume that those who think they are right are really right.

Democracy is as much a discipline as it is a privilege, disorder is its antithesis and it behoves us all who wish to see our democracy strengthened to ensure that the manner of its functioning does not become a travesty of what it ought to be.

The recent unrest in some parts of the country is traceable to a feeling held that the functioning of our democratic and administrative processes is not as clean as it should be.

Factionalism and groupism in politics and loyalty to caste, clan and community have sometimes led to improper decisions being taken and discontent is the result.

We have to guard against the mistakes of a few being visited on the many, if faith is to be preserved in the principles of democracy, corruption has to be eliminated in our public life.

It would be well to recognize that the tolerance of our society for weak, inefficient and unclean administration is not unlimited. If social evils such as blackmarketing, corruption and nepotism are not effectively dealt with, there is the danger that the idealistic patriotism of public spirited youth might in frustration seek other outlets.

The strengthening of our democracy is equally bound up with an improvement of our economy and a more equitable distribution of incomes and opportunities.

We are now nearing the end of the third year of our Third Plan. A recent appraisal of our economy has indicated that progress so far in the current Plan is well below what was hoped for.

It is only if the agricultural sector expands adequately that our economic growth would have sure foundations and be broad based. This is so obvious, but it bears repetition in the light of the inadequacy of our performance.

Though our achievements with regard to industrial expansion have happily been attended with greater success than those related to agriculture and increasing output on the farms, we have barely made a beginning in our effort at transforming ourselves into a modern industrial society.

Looking back over the period since we started our efforts at planned development, our achievement, though not inconsiderable in itself, has, in relation to needs, been insufficient. We are yet to make a marked dent on the problem of mass poverty—a problem made all the more intractable by the rapid growth of population.

Alongside the growth in incomes, we should see that its distribution does not widen the existing inequalities of wealth and opportunity.

Concentration of economic power tends to perpetuate inequality: a socialist reconstruction is intended to end it. A natural corollary to our political democracy is, therefore, a broad-based Welfare State with increasing attention to investment in our human resources.

A country like ours can ill-afford to divert its resources into non-productive uses like expenditure on armaments and we had been, by and large, successful in avoiding this: this is regrettably no longer so.

The aggression on our northern borders has brought home to us the perils of inadequate attention to our defences. We are correcting this but cannot afford to slow down our efforts at economic growth, for the danger to our freedom and our democracy is no less internal.

The only manner in which we can ensure that our resources are put to the constructive work of bettering conditions for our people is if we have the assurance of living in a world free from the threat of war.

Man has now reached a stage when his capacity for destroying himself has never been greater. The only sane and lasting way out of the present situation is by achieving general disarmament and setting up a world authority. It

is a pity—and one of particular import to us in India—that China has not been participating in the attempts for disarmament

In our relations with China and with our other neighbour, Pakistan, it is our earnest endeavour to aim at a peaceful and honourable settlement. We have striven all these years to bring about peace not only on our borders but throughout the world.

Our policy of non-involvement in military blocs was directed to this end. We remain as firmly committed as ever to the methods of peace and to the ideal of a larger world community.

The easing of the Cold War in the last few months owes not a little to the efforts of both the Soviet Premier, Mr. Khrushchev and of President Kennedy, who was so cruelly and senselessly cut off from our midst last November. President Kennedy was a symbol of youth, hope and courage to a new generation which yearned for peace. We in India, who counted him as a great friend of this country, mourn his loss.

As we begin another year in the life of our Republic let us rededicate ourselves to the ideals that have sustained this country in the past and to the completion of the unfinished task of building a brighter future for our people. This can be achieved if all of us work together with determination, unity and character. I wish you all well.

A Testing Time

FRIENDS! TOMORROW IS the fifteenth of anniversary of our Republic and I should like to take this opportunity of greeting our nationals at home and overseas and saying

a few words to them.

The last year has been a testing time for us all. The great leader, who had guided the destinies of our country since its rebirth as a free nation, is no longer with us. We who are left behind can have no greater inspiration than Nehru's life of dedicated service in our task of attaining the ideal and fulfilling the vision he bequeathed to us of a united, democratic, progressive and prosperous India.

Amidst the suffocating gloom of Nehru's departure from us, the nation displayed, as it has done before in moments of grave crisis, a remarkable sense of unity and responsibility, and the transition to a new leadership was effected with commendable dignity and orderliness. The new Government which enjoys wide popular support has been functioning with courage and caution. It is unfortunate that we have still with us diverse divisive forces based on region and language, religion and caste. It is essential to maintain and foster the sense of unity by subordinating these dividing factors to the central principle of national integrity and welfare. Nothing would help us more to do so than giving reality and meaning to our ideal of equality of status to every individual. Democracy is more than adult suffrage; it is the institutional manifestation of a refined way of life which exalts the individual and invests him with dignity.

Our parliamentary democracy assures political equality to all. But the inequalities of caste and outcast, the rich and the poor, are not only alien to the spirit of democracy, but are also a grave threat to its very existence. Social inequalities betray, corrupt, and deform the image of man. Social justice, however, cannot be promoted by acts of Government alone, necessary as these are; it calls for innate belief in the ideal that every human being has spiritual possibilities, that there are elements of sanctity and holiness in him which need expression and development. The general deterioration of our standards of behaviour may be traced to the neglect of the spiritual dimension of man. Through the discipline of home, school and democratic institutions, we must be trained to develop qualities of freedom from

fear, from hate, from greed, from love of power and from selfishness

If our democracy is to be stable it is necessary to raise the living standards of our people and ensure an equitable distribution of incomes and opportunities. Planned economic development has been our chosen instrument for freeing our people from want. Impressive as our achievements in this direction have been, they have not been commensurate with the expanding needs of a growing population. National income has been increasing but slowly and agricultural output in the first three years of the current Plan has hardly risen. It is true that bad weather has been a major factor behind this stagnation in farm production but have we done all that was necessary and possible to stimulate the agricultural sector into dynamic growth? Has our rural administrative organisation been effective enough to transmit to the peasants the possibilities and potentialities of scientific farming? Have we created the right economic environment through rational price policies and land reforms for the farmer to give of his best? It is necessary that we ask ourselves these questions, for a recognition of the factors behind our inadequate performance is the first step towards their removal. This year's harvest promises to be a good one—the best one on record—I am informed, but the impact of it is yet to be felt on prices. A psychology of scarcity persists. The behaviour of prices during recent years has indeed been a matter for serious concern, prices of food articles have risen the most and this has naturally affected the more vulnerable sections of our people. The character of the increase in prices has in it the makings of an inflationary situation. It is well to realise that the social tolerance of inflation among any people, and especially among a people the bulk of whom are poor, is bound to be very limited, their patience is not inexhaustible. The penalty we have to pay for inflation is not merely the sacrifice of future development, it is the threat to current economic, social and even political stability. It behoves us all—Government and the people—to do everything in our power to check the upward spiral of prices. The sure and

lasting remedy for inflation is, of course, increased production, but we should seek at the same time to eliminate the weaknesses in the existing system of distribution which has worsened the situation caused by a basic maladjustment between growing demand and insufficient supply. While Government, on its part, will have to put down sternly anti-social behaviour such as hoarding and blackmarketing and act with great courage, the co-operation of the people is equally essential in seeing us through the present difficult situation. The various States should pull together so that the problem of equitable distribution of food is dealt with on a national basis.

The problems of food and rising prices are, of course, of prime urgency today and I am glad that the Governments at the Centre and the States are actively dealing with them. But the goals of economic development are certainly wider. The battle against poverty and ignorance, disease and discrimination will be a long and arduous one—the more so since we have chosen to fight it within the framework of democratic institutions. It calls for the utmost mobilization of our human and material resources. It is all the more tragic that when we should have strained every nerve and harnessed all our energies to the task of bettering the conditions of our people, we have been called upon as a result of events not of our making, to divert resources to the national defence. This we are doing to the extent called for while desiring at the same time a peaceful and honourable settlement of all outstanding issues with our two neighbours—Pakistan and China. We should rule out reprisal, revenge and hatred and work for honourable settlement of our conflicts on principles of tolerance, friendship and understanding. If we attempt to fight fire with fire, we will all be burnt up. We have been till now expressing the voice of mankind, the conscience of humanity and attempting to bring about an era of relaxing tensions. We should do nothing which will go against this basic commitment of ours.

If there is any lesson which the diverse and complex

problems facing the nation at home and abroad have for us it is the need for calm and dispassionate thinking as well as decisive and courageous action. The heart of the people of this country is sound, and they expect their chosen leaders to lead them wisely and well. If we evade issues, compromise with basic principles and allow saboteurs to undermine the economy of the country, our minds will get confused and distracted and our people will become frustrated. This we should prevent at any cost. The challenge to statesmanship now is to provide cohesive thinking, a firm Government and an efficient and clean administration.

The consolidation of political democracy, the building of social equality, the promotion of economic growth and the maintenance of the integrity of the country call for co-operative endeavour of all sections of our people. Disciplined behaviour and hard and honest work are expected from the Government, from the administration, from the political parties, from the farmers, from the students and from every section of our community. As we enter another year in our Republic's life, let us resolve to apply ourselves to these tasks with self-discipline and determination, courage and character.

Peace Within and Without

FRIENDS ! I AM glad to have this opportunity, on the eve of the seventeenth Republic Day, to say a few words to our nationals at home and abroad.

The year just passed has been a difficult one. Only a fortnight ago, we lost Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri, whose name will be remembered in our history. Men live in people's minds not for the wealth they amass, or the power they

wield, or the positions they occupy. All these are ephemeral. Even memories of heroic deeds and stirring events fade away. What endures is the moral example we leave behind. Lal Bahadur was a great servant of the Indian people and was dedicated to peace and progress. In the unfortunate armed conflict with Pakistan he did not shrink from the use of force in the cause of just self-defence. Our fighting forces enhanced their prestige and honour by their many deeds of daring and skill, courage and sacrifice. It is a tragedy that in the lives of nations, as of men, we are obliged to use force and indulge in wars sometimes, before we settle down to ways of peace.

Thanks to the good offices of the Soviet Union and its Prime Minister, Mr Kosygin, the President of Pakistan and our Prime Minister went to Tashkent to discuss and compose their mutual differences, wherever possible. In these difficult negotiations Lal Bahadur showed unruffled calm and single-minded devotion to peace. In the Tashkent Declaration the two Governments have declared their intent to discuss all their problems in an atmosphere of peace and goodwill. No one will claim that the declaration is a perfect document. It has in it elements of give and take, compromise and conciliation. But the principles of renunciation of force for settling our disputes, the observance of the Cease-Fire Line and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other, if faithfully carried out, will create a friendly atmosphere and help us to live as good neighbours.

Though the ending of all wars would give us cause for rejoicing, still so long as envy, bitterness, fear and national passions remain in the hearts of men, that goal will be distant. The Tashkent Declaration is a major step onward on the difficult road to peace. It kindles hope for a new start in our relations with Pakistan. Let us approach our task with humility. Small nations are not innocent nor are big nations incapable of mistakes.

It is an indication of the strength of our democracy that in June 1964 we effected the transition smoothly from Nehru to Shastri. Last week we elected with speed, dignity

and orderliness a successor to Shastri. The election was a contested one and its conduct proved a victory for sheer decency in public life. The two candidates were free from traces of bitterness or rancour. They both love the country and the ideals we cherish and our people will stand together as one in facing the tremendous tasks that await us.

It is our hope that the new Government, headed by one who was brought up in an environment of exalted idealism, will carry on the torch of freedom and democracy and will fight social, economic and political injustice, with courage, integrity and compassion. The Government should attend immediately to the food problem among others.

The world has suffered not so much from our love of wealth or possessions as from the appetite for power. To regulate human activities, to protect mutual rights and enlarge opportunities for human fulfilment, the political arrangement of representative democracy was devised. To be successful, it requires responsible leaders who will strive with vision and imagination to preserve the freedom which has been won by the courage and sacrifice of thousands of devoted men and women and not let it be lost by the selfish indifference or interference of a few. Our leaders should lead the people instead of being led by them. We must educate them not to conform to the moods of the moment or the passions of the hour. We must train them to appreciate the preciousness as well as the precariousness of the democratic freedoms we possess.

Our democracy detests the enslavement of the soul. The human being should not be crushed by the organisation, power should not be wielded by a small group, policy should not dictate hatred of others, and the intimate emotional life of men should not be transformed into the life of the robots.

We love our country because we love truth and justice. It is not a question of my country right or wrong. It is a question of making our country measure up to the finest image we have of her.

Our society demands our loyalty and devotion since it provides us with certain liberties and helps us to realise the supreme ends of life, the four *purusarthas*: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksa*. To achieve these objects, to produce free creative personalities, we have to put an end to starvation, malnutrition, epidemics, illiteracy, social inequalities and industrial backwardness. Nothing is so important to man as man. The results of our democracy should be seen in our villages, farms and factories, schools and hospitals. The day cannot now be far off when democracies the world over will give the highest priority to education, health, housing and care for the young, the old and the helpless.

Even if we improve the conditions of life, we cannot neglect the inner life of man. Man himself has to be changed. His chief enemy is his own unruly nature, the dark pent-up forces in him. We have been developing desires and starving purposes. Love, which is the heart's compassion, is becoming rare in this world. It must grow wider in extent and deeper in perception.

Peace is in the hearts of all men of goodwill. We need peace within and without to solve our problems. If the values of civilisation are to endure, we must come to terms with our close neighbours and work for world fellowship.

The grave emotional concern of thinking men today is over the present state of the world. If deep uneasiness disturbs us when we look out on the world, it only shows that a great change must come. We are trembling on its verge. Whether it is a leap forward to unmeasured prosperity or a plunge backward to barbarism, depends on us, on what we make of the spectacular achievements of science and technology. We have enough material explosives which can put an end to life on earth.

Let us work for just and peaceful settlements, wherever possible and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as an essential preliminary for complete disarmament. That way lies sanity.

A Moral Awakening

FRIENDS! I AM happy to have this opportunity, on the eve of the eighteenth Republic Day, to say a few words to our nationals at home and abroad

It is said that our country consists of the whole geographical area bounded by the Himalayas in the North and the sea in the South—

*himalayam samarabhya yavad bindu sarovaram
hindusthanam iti khyatam adyantaksara yogatah*

All those who live within the limits of India are Indian, whatever may be their race, caste or community There was practically free trade in the matter of ideas, beliefs, and customs But, unfortunately, we have not yet developed an 'All-India' outlook We fight with each other for petty considerations and regional advantages Such minor interests will have to be subordinated to the larger national good

The land we live in and the traditions we live by, constitute the character of our country The democratic ideal has come down to us for many centuries

The fifth chapter of Vidyaranya's *Pancadasī* repeats the central sayings of the Vedas *prajnanam brahma (Rg Veda)*—Intelligence is divine, *aham brahma asmi (Yajur Veda)*—I and my Father are one, *tat tvam asi (Sama Veda)*—That art Thou, *ayam atma brahma (Atharva Veda)*—This Spirit is divine All these support the sanctity of the human individual

A society maintains its social cohesion, with large majority of its members holding common certain guiding principles Civilisation is not built with brick and mortar, steel and machinery but with men and women, with clarity of mind, charity of heart and spirit of co-operation A vision

of equality is an act of moral perception, which enables a man, in private or public condition, to see himself in his neighbour. To say of other human beings, or other groups of human beings, that they do not need, or they do not deserve, the advantages that we enjoy, is to dehumanize them. Unfortunately, we treated some of us as more equal than others, and denied to the majority the right for self-development. The rigid inequalities of the world are felt as a constant shame. The seers of the Upanisads, the Buddha, Nanak and Gandhi, among others, asked us to fight for greater equality and against caste discriminations, racial divisions and unequal opportunities in education, housing and livelihood. National integration increases as these divisions diminish.

The unruly behaviour of some members in our legislatures, the factions, caste disputes and political rivalries that have disrupted many a State, fasts unto death and even threats of self-immolation, riots and sabotage directed at almost everyone, from Vice-Chancellors to student leaders, have raised in many minds doubts about the stability of a united, democratic India. Internal differences are crippling our democracy as sectional interests and regional pressures are increasing.

All public questions require to be decided on principles of justice and equity and not as a result of pressure politics and such other methods of blackmail. If every group wishes to have its way by insisting on its own solution of small disputes which are raised into national issues government will get weakened.

The example of Mahatma Gandhi, which is cited often in this connection, is not relevant. In his fight for freedom, Gandhi did not wish to cause any hurt to the opponent, but acted with courage, conviction and a spirit of dedication. He tried to persuade the British Government to part with power. In his case, there was practically unanimous public support; he adopted the method of passive resistance, as an alternative to physical conflict. His method caused no material damage in contrast to the considerable amount

caused to our country by those who adopt the agitational approach

In a democracy, all problems require to be decided by discussion, adjustment of views and acceptance of consensus. Demonstrations, when held within the bounds of law and order, may focus sympathetic public attention on problems, and stimulate interest in their solution.

But our way of doing things has set a bad example to young men and women. We are cynical and contemptuous of values. We begin to develop hate towards those who don't agree with us. The incidents on November 7 in Delhi and on New Year Day in Calcutta brought down our reputation for good manners and standards of public behaviour. I do hope that all those responsible for these events feel a sense of sorrow, if not shame, at the extravagance we displayed.

The feeling should not be encouraged that no change can be brought about, except by violent disorders. We make the prospect of revolution inescapable by acquiescing in such conduct. As dishonesty creeps into every side of public life, we should be aware and bring about suitable alternations in our life. We should be the architects of peaceful changes and the advocates of radical reform. We must move forward with the times.

Charges of corruption are frequently made against people at all levels of Government, Central and State. Immediate disposal of these charges is essential. If the charges are false, their falsehood should be exposed. If there is any basis for them, this should be admitted and rectified. Such admission will enhance the prestige of the Government.

The last year has been the worst since Independence, full of natural calamities and human failures. In spite of our increased agricultural output and industrial production, we are unable to meet the requirements of a growing population. The drought conditions are worse than ever before in this century. Yet, even after making allowance for all the difficulties of the situation, we cannot forgive widespread incompetence and the gross mismanagement of

our resources. We cannot overlook the fact that, in a country of chronic food shortage, a third of the annual produce is destroyed by pests and waste.

It is not necessary for us to lose hope. Our political leaders should have a clear vision of the future of the country and not be content with their own individual comfort and survival.

Wars have always been cruel; they have now become barbaric. The accounts we read do not spare our sensitiveness. The other day a film was shown depicting modern war—children howling with pain and blinded with nuclear flashes, women crying over the dead bodies of their babies, bodies hurled about with disfigured faces. By adopting retaliation in kind, what do we achieve? The victims of modern war cry out against our unforgivable indifference, our criminal connivance in the evil that is done in our name. What greater error could there conceivably be than that these terrible weapons can protect us against our own timidity, short-sightedness, senseless and lassitude? We must learn that the only remedy for curing man's inhumanity to man is courage, vigour and confidence.

In all our external affairs the time for forbearance is now. To forbear is to give our brother man a chance to correct his mistake. Forbearance broadens our outlook and widens our spiritual awareness. It is that quality of understanding and compassion that we have to develop.

A thermo-nuclear war is not the only threat to man today. Because of the new development of science and technology, methods of production and modes of consumption are changing. The poor people of the world demand their proper share in the goods created by human inventiveness and are not prepared to wait much longer. We cannot preserve the *status quo* in order to retain a sense of stability.

To meet the present crisis, a complete change of spirit is essential. What we need is a moral awakening, which will win the co-operation of the widest range of people: *na vivekam vina jnanam*. Without discrimination there is no

wisdom It is wisdom that we have to evolve in this present confused, disturbed, world

The pursuit of wisdom has attracted me for many years Whatever my other preoccupations may have been, this search has been my main inspiration Even in public activities, I have tried my best to apply ethical considerations to the solution of our problems

I have had understanding from those with whom I worked, the President, Rajendra Prasad, and the three Prime Ministers, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Shrimati Indira Gandhi, as well as from representatives of all parties The goodwill and affection that I enjoyed from the people has been much more than I ever earned or deserved It is my earnest hope that the country will be vigilant and ever-renewing and vibrant with idealism and relevance to modern life



O

Dr. Zakir Husain

(13 05.1967 to 03 05 1969)

Building New India of Our Dreams

ON THE EVE of the nineteenth Republic Day, I greet my countrymen at home and abroad and convey to them my sincerest best wishes for the future

Our Republic has completed eighteen years of existence and has come of age. This is, indeed, a moment for calm introspection and reflection on where we stand and how we should proceed further in our onward march to bring peace and prosperity to our millions

As I so reflect, my first feeling, a feeling which I am sure you would share, is one of thankfulness that we have been able to get through the past year which was undoubtedly one of the most difficult that we have had to face. Another season of drought would have confronted us with a food situation that might have gone beyond our capacity to control. As it was, there were many anxious months and large numbers of our people, specially in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, were in acute distress. But thanks to the assistance of friends and to our own efforts and, most of all to the fortitude of the people themselves, we have managed to meet the challenge and to avoid the worst consequences of a famine. True, we are not yet quite out of the wood, but as, on my tours, I look upon the smiling countryside, my heart is lifted by a sense of renewed promise and of confidence in our land and its people and I feel assured that we are poised for a significant breakthrough in agricultural production which in a sense is the base of our economy. I would like to make a special appeal to our farmers and cultivators to leave no stone unturned in achieving maximum production which alone can lead to our economic stability

During recent months we have experienced an economic recession following a fall in the demand for manufactured goods and a consequent slowing down of industrial production. Among the many factors that brought this about, the largest single factor has been the decline in agricultural production with its consequent effect on the purchasing power of a very large section of our population. With the prospect of two good harvests bringing money to the cultivators, a substantial part of the problem will have been solved. But we are still faced with the difficult position in regard to our balance of payments and our requirements of foreign exchange.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which will be held in Delhi in February will, we sincerely hope, lead to the opening up of new and wider avenues of trade between the developing and the industrialised countries. But we may not forget that we are living in a highly competitive world, and if we are to sell our goods abroad, they must be able to compare, both in quality and in price, with those of other countries. It is seemingly a paradox that, though our level of wages is lower than in a highly developed countries, the goods that we produce are not cheaper but sometimes even more expensive and, consequently, more difficult to sell. We cannot obviously lower wages. The only answer, therefore, is increased productivity by the best and most efficient utilisation of our manpower and resources. I appeal to all workers in industry and in office establishment to make this possible, by hard, conscientious, efficient work and to "fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run".

A progressive agriculture and prosperous industry require a suitable political, social and cultural climate. It is only a united nation, living an orderly life of hard work and well-earned leisure, administering its affairs efficiently, that can attain economic stability. If we allow the energies of the nation to be wasted in futile conflicts, the prospect indeed will be bleak. Our people, in their wisdom, have chosen the democratic state as the frame of their national life. But we should never forget that democracy is not

simply a mechanical arrangement of rule by the majority. It implies a widespread and commonly accepted moral sense. It is only this moral authority that can make up for the deficiencies of a developing country by calling forth the best in each one of us. It imposes on each citizen the duty of the best possible. It presupposes a quality of character which each citizen should exert himself to attain.

Many things can happen to bring our young democracy to disrepute and I would beg of every citizen of this country to scrupulously avoid the pitfalls some of which I would like to mention here when taking stock of our situation. The first deadly pitfall is violence. Violence is the very negation of the true spirit and temper of democracy and should be totally eliminated from our national life as a method of finding solutions to problems. I regret to say that we still have to find an answer to our present tendency to take individual political issues to the streets. Unruly demonstrations, which often lead to the breaking of the law and not infrequently to tragic loss of life, cannot be accepted as the way of settling what are often complex issues. On the other hand, some ways must be found of dispelling frustration and the feeling that it is only by such extreme measures that grievances can be ventilated and redressed.

The second serious pitfall is indiscipline, indiscipline in the political parties, indiscipline in our deliberative bodies, indiscipline in our educational institutions. Democracy postulates a self-imposed discipline. Democracy allows full freedom of discussion, but once after discussion a consensus is reached or a majority decision taken, it has to be honestly and cheerfully implemented. Everyone of us partaking in the democratic process should constantly put himself the question if he is imposing this democratic discipline on himself, for only so can he make democracy workable. And each one of us should vividly realise that even if he has to criticise some of the proposals and measures of the Government, his loyalty to the state is unquestionable. Governments can and do change, but the state goes on and claims as a moral entity the unquestioning loyalty of its

citizens. It is the citizens who by their constant endeavour clothe the state with its moral quality and make it the embodiment of absolute values to which one gives free allegiance. It is our privilege to have been called upon to build up this new state of an ancient people in the formative years of its existence. Let each one of us devote himself to the fascinating task whole-heartedly. It is a great and noble task which will not be accomplished by just repeating some words, or by breaking window panes, or thoughtlessly destroying state property; it will require the dedicated and disciplined toil of all of us generation after generation. I appeal to all my people and specially to the youth to realise the significance of this splendid task and devote themselves to it with all their strength. I am sure the task will get done by their endeavours.

During the last eight months, I have had the pleasure and privilege of visiting most of the States of the Indian Union, meeting a large number of people from all walks of life and also coming into close contact with several units of our smart and efficient defence forces. I feel happy to be able to tell you that I firmly believe that our constitutional structure and the pillars that support it, like the hearts of our people, are perfectly sound and I appeal to all to stand united as one nation facing manfully all the problems that may confront us.

Let me on this happy day wish you, in all sincerity, God-speed in all your undertakings so that you may contribute your mite towards the enchanting task of building up the New India of our dreams. It is my fervent hope that this ancient land will ever remain a mighty democratic nation and take its rightful place in the comity of nations.

Cooperative Effort Makes up Deficiency in Resources

ON THE EVE of the Republic Day, I take this opportunity to greet you and offer you my best wishes for a future of peace, goodwill and prosperity

We have completed nineteen years of existence as a sovereign Republic. This is undoubtedly an occasion for rejoicing. But it is also a time for calm reflection and introspection, as we are celebrating this year as the Gandhi Centenary Year. The great man who won national freedom for us was born a hundred years ago and even after his tragic departure from us enough time has elapsed to enable a whole generation of full fledged citizens to appear on the Indian national scene without having as much as ever seen him. We shall constantly have to ask ourselves how far we have really tried to understand Gandhi's message,

Gandhi believed passionately in equal reverence for all religions, a reverence that would bind people professing different faiths in ties of understanding and comradeship. He dreamed of a social and political order inspired by sympathy and mutual consideration, an order that would create confidence in minorities and encourage them to participate freely and boldly in building up the life of the whole people.

We are afflicted with labour unrest, student agitations, communal and linguistic conflicts, and generally with angry discontent. We think of all the things that have not been done for us by others, of all the things done badly by others or not as well as they should have been. Gandhi's principle and practice was to fight all forms of social evil, but he knew that even success would be of no value unless in fighting against evil he purified and disciplined himself. I

would appeal to all, to students, to workers in fields and factories, to employees in Government and private offices to bear in mind the need for self-purification and self-discipline. At the same time, those who occupy positions of power, in Government or outside, must remember that in the exercise of power they are subject to the authority of the moral law. If and when they are confronted with indiscipline, they must examine how far it is due to their own loss of moral stature and influence.

In this connection, I am most deeply anxious about the spread of indiscipline among students. It is only the symptom of a common disease, but it is most dangerous, because the youth of today will have to shoulder the burdens of life tomorrow and may be found unfit and unworthy. I would, therefore, appeal to the students to remember that they must, in their own interest, learn to give duty the first place in their thoughts and actions. Duty is not dumb obedience, it is an active desire to fulfil obligations and responsibilities. The performance of duty is not dependent upon or subject to the grant of rights. The dignity of the democratic citizen consists not in possessing rights that will counter-balance his duties, but in his regarding the performance of his duties as the highest right and privilege. Our youth must remember that the future of their country depends upon their willingness and ability to fulfil their duty; otherwise any rights they demand and obtain will have no meaning and bring no benefit.

Gandhiji taught us that material progress will result from moral strength. Only a nation that has spirit and the courage to take big risks and make great sacrifices can rise to impressive heights. In this year of the Gandhi Centenary we must all pledge ourselves to be bold in action and take all necessary risks. We have before us examples of men who, in mechanisms created by the human mind, have soared into space, encircled the moon, established space station and returned safely to the earth. In this triumph of the human spirit, one salutes the combination of scientific skill, team work and that dedication to an idea which gives

one the courage to risk one's all

We have defined our national objective in terms of a co operative commonwealth which steers clear of the evils of both capitalism and statism In our social structure we have assigned an honoured place to private enterprise, state enterprise and co operative enterprise As we measure our advance against the goals, we find that the movement for people's co operation has been lagging far behind Inevitably, this carries the danger of affecting the character of even the other forms of enterprise, with grave consequences to our society I would, therefore, appeal for much greater attention to mutual co operation in the coming years

Turning to the economic field, we find we find a new hope in agriculture Although the erratic monsoons of last year and floods in some parts coupled with droughts in others affected the production of foodgrains and commercial crops, the prospect seems to quite favourable I would, however, like to caution against too much talk of an agricultural revolution being round the corner We are yet not free from the vagaries of monsoons and there are too many imponderables in the agricultural situation The formidable problem of agricultural organisation has to be tackled in all its manifold aspects if we are to ensure continuing self sufficiency

Industrial production has begun to look up after two years of stagnation and export performance has been particularly encouraging It is a happy sign that there is now an increasing awareness of the need for self reliance Our people are now aware of the danger of regarding every refinement of an old technology as a new technology The craze for import of mere sophistication is receding If the position of our resources for the Plan is still not satisfactory, the only conceivable remedy is an ever greater reliance on the ingenuity of our scientific and technical manpower Only a greater use of our talent and greater co operative effort throughout the country can make up for the deficiency in our resources

Friends, this brings me to the core of our problem. The sole remedy lies in the utmost utilisation of human material, which demands — let me repeat it — inner discipline and moral authority in every field and at every level. Should so much of our scant energy be wasted on work at cross purposes? On this solemn occasion, I would appeal most fervently to every Indian citizen to remember the need for co-operation in the honest fulfilment of duty. Individual loyalty to our people and our state alone can give strength to our national purpose and will.



V.V. Giri

(24 08 1969 to 24 08 1974)

Transforming a Vast and Complex Society

ON THE EVE of the twenty first Republic Day I greet all our countrymen and offer my best wishes for the future

This marks yet another milestone in our onward march of political, economic, social and cultural progress Republic Day is indeed an occasion for great rejoicing but it is also a time for calm introspection and retrospection and also for renewing our pledge to serve our motherland with greater resolve and determination

Let us this day pay our homage to the memory of the millions of our known and unknown soldiers — men and women — who without expecting any reward or appreciation gave their all — many of them even their lives — at the altar of freedom under the inspiring and noble leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, whose birth centenary we are celebrating now These martyrs have done their duty for the country and now it is up to us to make this political freedom meaningful — real and tangible — by providing the necessary economic wherewithal to the millions of our countrymen

On the eve of India becoming free Gandhiji stressed that political freedom without economic independence had no meaning and this responsibility of winning a certain measure of economic justice to our people rests squarely on our shoulders We have to keep this in mind constantly

We are on the threshold of the seventies During the past decade, India faced and overcame many trials and tribulations, including two wanton aggressions and two terrible droughts In managing these and other extraordinary situations, our people have shown a remarkable resilience which augurs well for the future of our democracy I firmly

believe that like the hearts of our people, our constitutional structure and the pillars that support it are also perfectly sound and I appeal to all to stand united as one nation, facing manfully any problem that may confront us in the future.

It is to our eternal shame, however, that in the Gandhi Centenary Year, communal violence should break out in the very region which was most hallowed by association with Bapu. This shows the virulence of the poison that is still working within our body politic. On this solemn occasion, therefore, in the name of the Mahatma who embodied the best in our culture, I appeal to all our countrymen to wipe out this blot on our country's name. No community should be suspected of disloyalty nor could any community claim any exclusive patriotism. Whatever may have been the barriers between the communities in the past, it is the historic responsibility of the present generation to inspire a sense of security and self-confidence in the minds of all citizens. We should regard ourselves as Indians first, last and always. I share in full the belief and faith that my esteemed predecessor, Dr. Zakir Husain, held that "providence has destined India to be the laboratory in which the greatest experiment of cultural synthesis will be undertaken and successfully completed." I appeal to all our people to participate zealously in this enchanting enterprise and thus make their valued contribution to the rich mosaic of India's culture.

Too long have we ignored the positive aspects of healthy nationalism. This is the force that can transcend the divisive forces of casteism, communalism and parochialism and transform them into creative energies. The vision of a glorious India and the spirit of nationalism will also operate as a positive force in accelerating economic progress.

Scanning the economic horizon, we find the country poised for a big change. There is already a break-through in agricultural production and a new hope is surging through our countryside. But to sustain and consolidate the gains we have to organise a concerted nation-wide drive for extended

irrigation, land development, soil testing, scientific crop rotation and the like, for which we have the necessary resources, not the least of which is our vast manpower waiting to be mobilized on a national scale. We must encourage the use of labour-intensive techniques of agricultural and industrial production wherever it is economically feasible. Our emphasis should be on combining a bold policy of full employment with rapid economic growth.

The glaring disparity between the rich and the poor, in town and country alike, calls for immediate attention and intelligent action. Mobilization of rural labour should go hand in hand with the providing of facilities to men with small means. Government agencies alone cannot cope with these huge tasks. It requires a vast network of genuine cooperatives which can only be raised and run by thousands of dedicated workers, devoting their time and energies to the service of the people in every nook and corner of the country.

In the industrial sphere we have made considerable progress. But here, too, a greater balance is necessary between growth in production and progress in independent technological competence as also between the large, the small and the cooperative sector. In bringing about such desirable changes, we should think not merely in terms of control but also in terms of development and diffusion of initiative. Our resources position is not satisfactory. The only conceivable remedy is an even greater reliance on the ingenuity of our scientific and technical manpower. I have great faith in our young scientists and engineers and they must be encouraged in every way to make full use of their initiative and drive. It is only a fuller use of our talent and greater co-operative effort throughout the country that can make for the deficiency of our resources.

Let us remember if development has its own charms, it has its problems, too. With expectations roused, there is natural impatience for results. And the impatience of every region and of every group of people creates explosive situations, which can only be met by a common understanding.

and acceptance that hard work and hard work alone can bring about increasing equality through increasing prosperity. We often tend to forget Gandhiji's ringing message that "Work is worship." Distributive justice is a vain dream without the stern ethics of work. We should constantly remind ourselves of Jawaharlal Nehru's words that "this generation is condemned to hard work so that our children could live better."

The magnitude of our problems is vast and there is no time to lose; nor are there any ready-made solutions. We cannot allow our energies to be wasted on working at cross-purposes and on brooding over the past instead of building up a better future. True, there are differences in outlook and ideology, but the agreements are more basic and more pervasive. If we try more seriously to understand the present realities and the long-term interests of the country as a whole, we shall recognize the imperatives as well as the possibilities of harmony. In the changes that we seek, our sole and sufficient sanction should be the people's will, educated and expressed through democratic means. For transforming a vast and complex society within a democratic framework, our people will have to be well informed and inspired by a broad common purpose. With patience and mutual tolerance and our eyes fixed steadily on the path ahead, we may well hope that despite current controversies and confusion, we shall soon evolve and strictly observe norms of political life which will ensure rapid economic progress as well as social harmony and national integrity.

I have an abiding faith in the innate goodness of our people, in their love for peace and in their capacity for hard honest work; and there is no doubt in my mind that in spite of the many difficulties which we face, our ultimate success is assured. Let us all resolve once again that we shall march to the goal of the India of our dreams, undeterred by all temporary obstacles and difficulties, and assure for the millions of our countrymen true justice, contentment and happiness.

Another Milestone in the Progress of Democracy

TOMORROW WILL COMMENCE the twenty-second year of our Republic, and the nation prepares to celebrate the Day I offer my warm greetings and good wishes to my comrades, my fellow citizens, throughout India and abroad. Our democracy is on the eve of yet another milestone in its progress. In the next two days, notifications will issue calling upon our people to choose their representatives for the Lok Sabha, that supreme body to which the Government of the day is made responsible under our Constitution. There will also be simultaneous elections to the State Legislative Assemblies of Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

The most important sanction for the existence and survival of a parliamentary democracy is free and fair elections. A parliamentary democracy derives its strength and authority from the will of the people in whom resides the sovereign power to choose the Government. India has rightly been described as the largest democracy in the world. Our electorate, it is estimated, is now around 275 million. It has been a matter of pride to us that our electoral machinery has earned a reputation for the observance of the highest standards of impartiality and integrity. This is equally a tribute to every single voter, man or woman, who constitutes our vast electorate. Other countries have complimented us for the orderly and peaceful manner of our elections.

Adult suffrage has come to stay in India, and the citizen's vote today is considered a most cherished right. I would appeal to all the voters, and to the political parties who play such a vital role in the elections, to totally eschew bitterness or violence, or abuse of the human persons in

their election campaigns. There is virtue in preserving good conduct. Let it not be said even of a single individual that he subordinated himself to base instincts which may prove destructive of a harmonious society.

In the days of our struggle for freedom, Gandhiji gave us the direction: "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony." This direction has as much relevance today as when Gandhiji gave it long years ago. Our Constitution has committed the State to promote the welfare of the people by securing, and protecting effectively, a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life. In a vast country like ours steps for bringing about, and preserving, a better social order have to be a continuous and continuing process. Its problems and its challenges, particularly with persisting poverty and growing unemployment, constantly remind us that we all have a job to do and to do it well. Economic distress cannot be solved by political adjustments. What is needed is an earnest desire and a dedicated will to do good and to do it in such a way that those who are in greater need, those sections of the community who are less favourably placed, receive the highest attention.

The material resources are not the exclusive property of any class or group of people. They have to be at the disposal of the wider family of man which constitutes the nation. Wide social and economic cleavages among a people and the accompanying inequalities of welfare and opportunity will hinder the progress of any nation. Real progress towards greater equality should concern the masses of the poorer people.

We achieved independence by establishing a tradition of disciplined political co-operation and collective responsibility. We gave the parliamentary system a meaning and a purpose which have helped us to preserve it. Since

Independence, a new generation of young men and women has grown up in our country Their horizons and perspectives are naturally different from those of the older generations They are impatient because they find that the response to their urges and needs is not quick enough This is a point of view which cannot be overlooked It is they who will be the leaders, administrators and statesmen of tomorrow

In the building of a better and more prosperous India, we have insisted on peaceful and orderly methods We are respected in the comity of nations because we are recognised as a peace loving people While we seek friendly co-operation from all countries and value their association, we do not tie ourselves to the ideology of the one or the other We believe in universal human freedom, not based on the supremacy of any particular class, but on the freedom of the common man everywhere and the fullest opportunities for him to develop

On the solemn and joyous occasion of the celebration of the Republic Day I invite every citizen of our great country to rededicate himself to the cause of national consolidation, not as a goal or as a mere aim, but as the visible expression of achievement and fulfilment

Introspection and Retrospection

ON THE EVE of the twenty-second anniversary of the Republic Day, I am indeed, happy to greet you, my fellow-citizens at home and abroad, and convey to you my best wishes for the future

The Republic Day this year is of special significance

and marks an important milestone in the history of our nations. Thanks to the unity and determination of our people and the valour and bravery of our armed forces, we have emerged from the recent conflict with renewed hope and confidence in our national destiny. A ruthless military dictatorship in Pakistan forced us into a conflict which we did every thing in our power to prevent. This conflict was one between ideas and systems, between a people and their oppressors, and not between two countries. We have no quarrel with the people of Pakistan. We fought to uphold certain basic and fundamental values. The freedom and liberty of a people cannot be made the pawns of political power and the spirit of man cannot be crushed by armed might. The emergence of the sovereign State of Bangladesh wedded to the principles of democracy, socialism and secularism has demonstrated these truths more vividly than any other event in recorded history, and we welcome this development not only as vindicating our policies but as a guarantee of peace and progress among all the people of the sub-continent.

I would appeal to those now in authority in Pakistan to give up the attitude of ill-will towards us. Let us all awaken from the nightmare of the past. Let us, the people of India, the people of Bangladesh and the people of Pakistan, together look forward to the establishment of friendly, co-operative relations for the common advantage of all our peoples and for the furtherance of peace and human freedom all over the world.

Since we attained independence twenty-five years ago, we have unceasingly supported in international forums the just struggle of people everywhere for the attainment of basic human rights and human liberties, and for freedom to live in peace and without fear of exploitation. The days of colonialism are gone and no amount of money, power or military might, can hold a people under tyranny or subjection. The United Nations will serve its purpose only if it ceases to be an arena for partisan propaganda or power manipulation and channelises its energies and its resources for a durable

peace and for universal welfare

The recent conflict also proved beyond doubt the strength and vitality of our parliamentary system of Government. Under the able and enlightened leadership, which our country has been fortunate to have, this system has the essential strength to withstand pressures, strains and stresses of whatever nature and in whatever form. For its policies and actions, the Government derives its sanction from the people and thus ensures the essential unity of the nation as a living and growing entity.

The people of India, today, are wide awake and on the alert. In the face of the national crisis, we have forged together a unity of purpose and action. The task of reconstruction of our economy is the biggest challenge we are facing now. And in meeting this we have to evolve methods and means which rely primarily on our own resources—human, intellectual, moral and material. The Governments at the Centre and in the States are the joint trustees for the welfare and progress of all our people. There is no room and no justification for friction among States or as between the States and the Union. The paramount consideration should be the unity and integrity of the country and the common good of all our people. There can be no compromise on this vital issue. Let our emotions and energies be devoted entirely to constructive activity.

I would remind employers and the workers of my recent appeal to declare a moratorium on strikes and lock outs for a period of three years. I am sure my appeal will find a ready response both from the workers and the employers and there will be a greater realisation that differences and disputes should be resolved through direct negotiations and conciliation rather than by resort to direct action. While I believe that the right to strike is inalienable, it should not be used at a time like this. I am quite confident that both labour and management will rise to the occasion and increase production and productivity and thus help the nation in achieving the aim of self sufficiency. I have full faith in my working class comrades that in this hour of

destiny they will not fail the nation. I am quite sure the employers will consider the workers as partners in the industrial system.

We have yet a long way to go in removing economic inequalities and social disparities. We must import a sense of purposeful urgency in dealing with this problem. This is also closely linked up with the question of regional imbalances and regional disparities which can be corrected only if we strike at the root cause of our economic and social ills. Starting from the base, our aim should be to build a prosperous and contented rural community. Pilot projects for maximum utilisation of all available land for agriculture and organisation of agro-industries and other cottage industries, on a co-operative basis, should be encouraged. In the implementation of the Five Year Plans we have to impart a greater sense of realism and change the emphasis from programmes to performance. We have to bring about a scientific transformation of our economy. I have immense faith in the ability of our young scientists and technologists to meet the challenges before them. We have to ensure that modern technology is adapted to suit our conditions and thus help in increasing the well-being of the largest number of our people.

To the youth of the country, more especially to students, I would appeal to observe rules to discipline their conduct. The building of a new India requires the services of disciplined, well-trained and patriotic people and the participation of all sections. There cannot be a privileged class and an under-privileged class in the harmonious evolution of a society.

I would also like to stress that our administration should address itself to the task before us with patriotism, dedication and promptitude. The administrative machinery must be made responsive to the needs and aspirations of our people. Rules of procedure framed in an earlier colonial era can no longer be valid. We must seek to promote talent, idealism and vision. It is only through creativity and innovation in every field of national endeavour that we can

usher in an era of social and economic change which our people demand. Let us all work together and work hard towards the achievement of our objective through disciplined conduct under democratic norms.

When I spoke to you last year on this occasion, the country was due to elect a new Lok Sabha. This time, most of the States are due to elect representatives to their Legislative Assemblies. I would like to express my sincere hope that the elections will take place peacefully and without rancour.

No country, far or near, need have any apprehensions about India's progress and strength. A strong, stable, prosperous India will not only benefit all the people of India but add to the strength, stability and prosperity of this whole region.

Republic Day is, indeed, an occasion for great rejoicing, but it is also a time for calm introspection and retrospection. Let us on this sacred day renew our pledge to serve our motherland with greater dedication and determination. India today has a firm foundation for progress. Let us all, together, build on this a society in which our people can live a fuller and more abundant life.

Indian First Indian Last

TOMORROW THE NATION celebrates its twenty-fourth Republic Day, and I offer my warm greetings and sincere good wishes to my fellow citizens and comrades throughout the country and abroad on the occasion.

Each Republic Day brings back to us the memories of our struggle for upholding our right to liberty and freedom.

We have cherished this as the most valued right so that we as a nation may progress according to the genius of our own people and according to our own needs. Ours has been the path of peaceful evolution, and the foundations for free India are rooted in our unshakeable adherence to the unity and integrity of the country. To preserve that unity and integrity unsullied and unhampered, we have deliberately eschewed all forms of communalism, casteism and parochialism in our national life. As a people, we are a single entity, to whichever part of the country we may belong. Living proudly under the tricolour flag, which represents the glory of Mother India, we are all Indians first, Indians last and Indians always.

The developments in Andhra Pradesh have caused me the deepest concern. It was inevitable perhaps that the Mulki issue gave rise to certain genuine misgivings in the minds of the people of Andhra. But we are a responsible democracy, and the only effective way of advocating a cause is through the democratic process. Violence and destruction of public property, whether in Andhra, or in Assam, or in any part of the country, solve nothing. On the other hand, they ill-serve the cause by rousing bitterness and acting as a stumbling block in realising the objective. I have again and again condemned such activities as being inimical to national interest.

Life in Andhra Pradesh must come back to normalcy and a calm atmosphere restored in the quickest possible time. The problems that have arisen in Andhra Pradesh involving the future of that State would require the most careful consideration in all its aspects. In discussing them it is necessary that there should be a full, free and frank exchange of all points of view without any pre-conditions or reservations. In our system of government, there is no question of any decision being arrived at through compulsion or coercion or under threat of force. It is only when all points of view are heard and differences ironed out dispassionately that we can arrive at satisfactory and lasting solutions to any problem. As an old trade unionist and negotiator of

experience, I have consistently held that nothing is the last word on the subject of negotiations. Where there is a determined will, I am confident that we shall succeed in finding a way out. I have an abiding faith in the good sense of our people.

Fair and equitable opportunities of employment and steps for developing backward areas are matters which concern all India and not any one particular region or State. In dealing with them, the principal consideration has to be the even progress of all sections of the community, and more particularly the vast number of our people who are still backward socially and economically. Rights conferred by narrow legal interpretations can only be transitory. They can be real and sustaining only when they are looked upon as obligations of the State to the people. We have striven all these years in our Republic to build a society in which disparities between one citizen and another will be minimized, if not altogether eliminated. There is no difference of opinion in regard to our fundamental objective, namely, that every citizen has a right to a decent life and equal opportunities of self development.

The year that has just gone by has been yet another period of great strain and stress for us. In different parts of the country, we have had to face one of the worst droughts ever, throwing a large number of families into acute distress. The drought has also impaired very considerably our food production, compelling us to import some quantities of foodgrains to tide over our present difficulties. Uncertainty caused by the vagaries of the weather or natural calamities is not an unusual phenomenon in any part of the world. But, to us in India who have been striving hard to push forward programmes of development, this uncertainty poses a variety of complex problems. We have a growing population and a vast number of them still living on the poverty line. Rural India which accounts for 80 per cent of our population derives its main source of sustenance from agricultural operations. A setback to our agriculture upsets vital sectors of our economic development. We have, therefore, to evolve

methods and means by which we would be in a position to meet these scourges of nature and prepare ourselves to overcome them with confidence.

Poverty and unemployment continue to be the two most serious challenges facing the nation. The drought, the power shortage and the rising prices add to our difficulties. The social change which we are committed to bring about will be real only when we have devised viable programmes for occupying our vast man-power in gainful employment. Utilising the immense land and water resources in our country to the fullest extent is of fundamental importance in this process. I consider that training in skills related to agricultural operations has to form an integral part of our education at the pre-University stage. This will give the students a more meaningful approach to education and the much-needed self-reliance. This would also enable the wholesome participation of the youth in national life and national development.

The present unrest among the students is attributable to a large extent to their apprehensions as to their future when they complete their education. I would ask the students to give up their agitational approach and devote their time wholeheartedly to equip themselves better so that they may play their due role in the process of the social and economic advancement of the country.

I would also like to address a special word of appeal to my comrades, the workers in industry. While strike is an inalienable right of the workers, they should remember that this weapon should be resorted to only when all other methods of settlement fail. If it is used indiscriminately, as we so often witness today, its consequences will have a direct bearing on the wider national interest. Developing Countries like India can ill-afford to waste available industrial capacity and resources. We have in our country the necessary scientific and technological expertise for industrial growth in a variety of fields. At this present juncture, when we are passing through what may be aptly called a difficult and crucial decade in our development, I would like to

repeat a suggestion I made last year that the workers and employers should agree to a self-imposed moratorium on strikes and lock-outs for a period of, say, three years. This will help advance the cause not only of higher productivity but lead to increased employment and overall prosperity.

In our international relations we have consistently followed the path of peace and negotiation. We are extremely happy to note that the Peace Talks in Paris have finally been rewarded with success and the Vietnam War is coming to an end. We welcome this statesmanlike decision of all parties concerned and hope that this would lead to restoration of peace and stability not only to the Vietnamese people but all the Indo-Chinese people.

Our friendship with Bangladesh has branched out into co-operation in various fields, and, in the international arena, in concerted action for peace. It is a tribute to the political genius and intellectual traditions of the people of Bangladesh that a newly independent country should have adopted a Constitution within a year of her independence and should hold general elections within three months of that Constitution coming into force.

We have continued to strive for the establishment of mutually beneficial and friendly relations with Pakistan. The Simla Agreement has been a first step towards the establishment of durable peace and setting in motion the process of reconciliation and good neighbourliness between the two countries. It is a happy augury that pursuant to this agreement India and Pakistan have been able through bilateral negotiations to determine a line of control in Jammu and Kashmir which is to be respected by both sides. This should lead to an era of peace and lowering of tensions in the area. It is my earnest hope that we would be able to work for the economic prosperity and social progress of the peoples of the sub-continent.

National life to be purposeful requires a total involvement of all our people. The strength of a nation is judged by the capacity of its people for hard and disciplined work. This

capacity we have in abundance. Our concept of the Welfare State will reach fulfilment only when we are able to provide full employment to all our people. This is a gigantic task. Let us all put our shoulders together and work hard for its achievement.

Need for Disciplined Conduct

TOMORROW THE NATION will celebrate the day which marks the commencement of the twenty-fifth year of our Republic. On this joyous occasion, I offer my greetings and felicitations to my fellow citizens, both within the country and abroad. At the outset, I would like to remind ourselves that like many other nations of the world, currently, we are passing through a period of unprecedented pressure and strain on our economy. The factors contributing to this situation are not entirely of our making; some are due to causes which have had global repercussions and could not be anticipated. The challenge that is posed before us has brought to the fore the imperative necessity for forging our best national endeavour.

As a people, we, in India have suffered in the past many privations and hardships. It is often found, when the country is on the threshold of recovery from one crisis, another of a greater magnitude confronts it. This only underlines the urgency and the importance of evolving a coherent and viable economic policy which would guarantee to the vast millions of our population an assured life of security with basic and minimum comforts. When we see that almost 40 per cent of our population continues to live below the poverty line, we realise the inadequacy of our performances and achievements.

The growing unrest that we witness in different parts of the country has caused me the deepest concern and pain. Throughout our struggle for independence, Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, taught us the lesson of Truth and Non violence. It was by a strict adherence to this principle that we succeeded in making a mighty Empire bow down before the will of an unarmed people determined to undergo any sacrifice or suffering. Today, we are politically independent free to govern ourselves. The need for disciplined conduct is far greater at the present juncture. Let us remember that we cannot achieve our goals by agitations, by burning or looting of shops and godowns, by disruption of means of transport, or by strikes, lock outs and *bandhs*. Such acts of violence and indiscipline are a direct invitation to chaos. They not only destroy and deplete stocks of available essential goods but present their movement to needy areas, and thereby aggravate an already difficult situation. They cause the deepest hurt to the innocent and poorer sections of the community. No responsible government can countenance destructive methods. Prompt and firm action has to be taken to instil confidence that personal liberty and freedom of the citizen is fully safeguarded, and law and order maintained. We are a democracy. Let it not be forgotten that it is through our unshakeable faith in democratic methods that we have been able to preserve the unity and integrity of our country.

The situation that we face today can be tackled effectively only by a total involvement of the people in every walk of life in our efforts to achieve positive results. I attach the greatest importance to public co operation and to the creation of dependable agencies of vigilant public opinion in every part of the country. These agencies, formed through association of citizens and functioning within the bounds of law, could become the most potent instrument to deal with hoarders, black marketeers and profiteers. It is the Government's duty to punish—and punish most stringently—those anti social elements who by resort to dishonest and unsocial practices seek to make personal gains at the expense of the society. This duty is best discharged when

Government is assisted by a vigilant public who will expose these evil doers fearlessly.

The phenomenon of a growing and crushing price rise has resulted in unsettling in a variety of ways the normal life of the community and has imposed hardships as seldom known before. The persistent shortage of essential commodities and lack of adequate stocks of foodgrains to enable their equitable distribution among the States are some of the causes attributed to the price rise. We must evolve a basic plan of procurement applicable in all States and organize an efficient public distribution system. There has to be a determined effort to increase production, particularly of commodities essential for day-to-day consumption. We have also to build up adequate stocks. If all this is done, prices are bound to stabilize and come down to reasonable levels.

I have appealed time and again to my working class comrades, whether in the farms or in the factories, to extend their fullest co-operation to maintain production without interruption and improve productivity to the maximum possible extent. A climate of self-reliance will be created only when we utilise all our available resources to the maximum advantage. It was in this background that I gave a call two years ago for a self-imposed moratorium on the part of the workers and employers on strikes and lock-outs. I would like to repeat this call again. Mere demand for rise in wages without a corresponding will to increase production and productivity will not bring real economic gains. National interest, and not individual gain, should be our watch-word.

The affluent sections of the society should realise that they can no longer hold on to their ways of life and will have to share what they have with those less fortunately placed so that their riches subserve the common goal. The fruits of economic freedom have eluded vast millions of our people too long. This is the reality and the challenge that we have to face. As Gandhiji repeatedly used to say, real India lives in her villages, and the most solid foundation for economic self-sufficiency can be built only by raising the

standard of living of the rural poor and other vulnerable sections of the society. The most rewarding resource at our disposal is the vast potential of land and the capacity of our people to work on it profitably. Any appraisal of our Five Year Plan to be meaningful will have to keep this concept in the forefront, and our plan programmes must be oriented accordingly.

India is respected today by the nations of the world for her political maturity and development on peaceful lines. Such progress as we have made since independence has evoked the admiration of other countries. We have entered into close collaboration with a number of these countries in economic and other fields to our *mutual advantage*. We value highly the goodwill thus created.

Our people have shown in the past that we are capable of rising above personal or parochial considerations and stand as one man in times of national emergency. The crisis that we are facing demands of us the same unity of purpose and determination. Our strength lies in our abiding sense of unity and national integrity. Let us direct our whole-hearted attention towards building an India in which our most urgent preoccupation will be to work for the well-being of the people.



Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed

(24.8.1974 to 11.02.1977)

A Day of Calm Introspection

ON THE EVE of the twenty-sixth Republic Day, I am happy to convey my greetings and good wishes to my fellow citizens in India and abroad. This is the first time I am addressing our people as their first servant and I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude for the love and affection that the people have bestowed on me in such abundant measure. It shall always be my endeavour to justify the trust reposed in me.

Our Republic has completed 25 years of its eventful existence and tomorrow we will celebrate our National Day. This is no doubt a joyous occasion but this is also an occasion for calm introspection. We have to draw a balance-sheet of our achievements as well as failures and take a firm resolve to overcome the obstacles that have come in our way.

It has been a testing time for the nation and any one with the interest of the country at heart will feel dismayed at the growing temper of violence in our midst. Violence is not only opposed to the national ethos but is the very anti-thesis of the democratic spirit and, if unchecked, will become a grave threat to our integrity and survival. We have chosen the path of democracy and peaceful change, enshrining in our Constitution the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. I would earnestly appeal to the leaders of all political parties to realise the gravity of the situation and take concrete steps to check this drift towards disruption and chaos.

We are facing a serious economic situation and it will require the united effort of our people to overcome the crisis. The spiralling of prices and the shortage of food and other

essential commodities have caused serious hardships to our common people. No doubt many extraneous causes are responsible for our present plight and there is no easy way out except through sustained and disciplined work. We as a nation must imbibe the ethics of hard and honest work. Whatever be one's ideology, no nation can prosper without the unremitting labour of its citizens. We have vast human and material resources. We have laid the foundation for self-sustaining economic growth. We are one of the foremost industrial nations of the world. Our scientists and technologists are second to none. We have a glorious heritage. With all these advantages we should march forward with unity and courage and with faith in our destiny.

I believe our basic problem is agricultural progress. Our country has to be self-sufficient in food, commercial crops and in the basic necessities of life. This is a fundamental requirement of our political and economic independence. To my mind if we have to bring about a resurgence in agriculture we have to evolve after careful study an integrated land and water use plan for the country. This will involve an appropriate combination of crops, animal husbandry, fisheries and forestry with a view to increasing agricultural production and productivity. Again rural life will not thrive unless agriculture is linked with a massive growth of small-scale agro-industries by adoption of modern technology on a decentralised basis. With the people's enthusiastic participation and determined action at every level of administration we can make our villages throb with a new life.

The world is now faced with an unprecedented energy crisis. But in a sense this can be construed as a blessing in disguise. We can, from now on, orient our fuel economy to our indigenous resources. The ultimate source of all earth's energy is the sun. And trees are by far the most efficient means known for tapping this solar energy. By growing energy forests in every village and replanting with religious zeal we cannot only renew continually the country's

fuel resources but also save the soil and the rivers and thus maintain the ecological balance This and activities like digging canals, contour bunding, recycling of wastes including human wastes, can change the face of our countryside

During the last year, industrial production suffered a virtual stagnation Government has adopted a policy of utmost utilisation of installed capacity which, I hope, will improve the state of our economy It is a pity that our richer classes are blindly copying the life styles of the affluent societies of the West and the industrial structure is largely oriented to meeting the ever increasing needs of this small minority This untenable concept must change and the industry must be made to produce articles of mass consumption at reasonable prices It is imperative that the people distribution system should play a vital role in channelling essential commodities It will also be necessary to establish a fair exchange between the agricultural and industrial products

We were privileged to receive many distinguished world statesmen in recent months These goodwill visits have helped to strengthen the bonds of friendship between us and these countries I was happy to find keen appreciation by these leaders of India's foreign policy and her efforts provide a better and happier life for her people They particularly welcomed India's commitment to the ideals of freedom and equality and her unceasing endeavours to improve the climate of peace in the sub continent The world is watching the progress of our efforts in creating a new social order through democratic means

Friends, I am an optimist and I do not share some people's gloom about our future Our people are mature and our Constitution has remarkable resilience But, as I have said earlier, there are no short cuts to the attainment of our rightful place in the world except the straight path of unity discipline, hard and honest work While not minimising the enormity of the challenge facing us, I firmly believe that it can and should be boldly met and overcome by the united will of our people May God guide us on the right path

Need For Self-Imposed Discipline

ON THE EVE of our twenty-seventh Republic Day, I am happy to greet all of you, my countrymen at home and abroad, and offer my best wishes.

Thanks to the series of measures taken by the Government, the general level of prices in our country has come down perceptibly during the past year. This is not a small achievement. The vigorous actions taken against smuggling, tax evasion and black money have also produced significant results. The abolition of bonded labour and the attack on the perennial problem of rural indebtedness have revived hopes in the weaker sections who constitute the large majority of our people. I am glad measures are being taken to implement land reforms as an important part of the new economic programme. Vigorous steps are needed for the enforcement of land ceiling laws and for the distribution of surplus lands to the landless. . .

Containment of inflation has been helped by the striking increase in the past year in food production and the output of other crops like cotton. We must, however, admit that this increase in production has been helped by favourable weather. There is great scope for improvement in our agricultural practices and pattern of organization. I am happy to note that the State Governments are evincing a new sense of responsibility towards national development as indicated by their readiness to settle amicably and quickly the long-standing disputes relating to river waters. I am sure these agreements will speed up the implementation of various river valley projects and increase the utilization of the country's vital water resources.

On the industrial front, the country is now well poised for achieving much higher target of growth in production

and exports. The public sector, which has to play a dominant role in our economy, has improved its performance significantly. Utilisation of installed capacity has gone up in every major public sector unit. Power shortage which was causing great concern in the earlier part of the year has also registered remarkable improvement. The railways have done extremely well. The nationalised coal industry has also increased its output as well as productivity. In this connection, I cannot but refer to the grievous tragedy at Chasnala. The Government is not only providing all possible relief to the victims of the disaster but is determined to see that all possible safety measures are taken in our mines to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy.

Although much has been done in recent years to relieve the difficulties of the weaker sections of the population, much yet remains to be done to transform the lives of the people in the countryside. This is a task in which not only the Government but the nation as a whole and every section of the people have to co-operate. Only so can we hope to lift the curse of poverty from the face of the nation. Voluntary co-operation at every level can contribute a great deal to supplement what the authorities are doing. I strongly feel the co-operative movement in India must be revitalised from the village level upwards. Here is an area in which there is tremendous scope for our youth to render service by providing informed and dedicated leadership to the co-operatives at the same time developing the talents and utilising the services of the weaker sections of the population. The impression that the co-operatives benefit the well-to-do alone should be disproved. The co-operative movement should be a movement of the masses, for the masses and function as the main instrument of social change. When these co-operatives, reinforced by the regional rural banks, start giving credit and other services to small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans, a basis will have been laid for a new surge of production and, may I say, a new civilization.

During my visits abroad, it was brought home to me that the countries of Asia and Africa expect India to play

a leading role in the supply of technical know-how and equipment. In the co-operation between the developing nations themselves, the financial resources of some can be matched with the raw material resources of others through the medium of countries like India, which have the requisite scientific and technical manpower. There is a general awareness now that the high sophistication in technology of the industrial nations is not suitable for conditions in the developing countries. This has placed on India an onerous but a very welcome responsibility. In this connection, I cannot help deprecating the continuing craze in our country for foreign collaboration. The generation of technology within the country receives less encouragement than its transplantation from abroad. I hope that overcoming this weakness, we shall devote greater attention to developing technologies suited to our resources.

Let me conclude with an appeal to all our people to learn to practise what Acharya Vinoba Bhave calls *Atmanushasan*, self-imposed discipline. Once all parties accept this need for self-discipline and the obligations which are essential for the smooth working of our democratic system, the country, I am sure, will enter a new era of all-round progress.

The Essence of Planning

TOMORROW WE ARE celebrating the twenty-eighth Republic Day. On this auspicious occasion, I am happy to greet all of you, my countrymen at home and abroad, and convey to you my good wishes.

India has rightly been described as the largest democracy in the world. Democratic processes have taken firm and abiding root in our country. Our democracy is on the eve

of yet another milestone in its progress. Soon we shall have elections to the Lok Sabha. A parliamentary democracy derives its strength and authority from the will of the people in whom resides the sovereign power to choose the Government. Our people have time and again shown their political maturity and our electoral machinery has earned a reputation for the observance of highest standards of impartiality and integrity. I appeal to all political parties to eschew bitterness and rancour in their election campaigns and help maintain an atmosphere of peace and calm in the country. Acts of violence and indiscipline are incompatible with the practice of democracy.

We enter the new year in a mood of hope and confidence. Thanks to the determined efforts of the Government and enthusiastic popular participation, the country has made rapid strides, in all spheres of national endeavour. There is now a very comfortable level of buffer stock of foodgrains. There has been a sustained drive against the black money economy and smuggling and for fuller utilisation of industrial capacities, efficient procurement of foodgrains and successful export promotion. The rate of growth of industrial production, during the year, has been about 10 per cent—the highest in any single year recorded so far. What is even more gratifying is that the increase has been appreciable in vital industries like power generation, coal, steel, fertilizers, newsprint, cement and aluminium. The performance of public sector enterprises has been particularly remarkable. All these have contributed to containing the inflationary pressures. In a world in which high rates of inflation have become almost universal, our countrymen can congratulate themselves on this achievement. The country has, moreover, made headway in a field which was previously the preserve of the more developed industrial nations. Our consultancy firms, both in the public and the private sector have proved their worth with the result that not only countries of West Asia, South East Asia and Latin America but also some in Europe are entrusting them with responsibilities for design, engineering and erection supervision of steel, heavy electricals and such other plants,

in the face of stiff competition from the world's leading firms. I am sure, India's technological maturity will pave the way for ever increasing co-operation between us and other developing countries.

Our successes should not, however, make us complacent and blind us to our short-comings. The recent spurt in prices of edible oil, raw cotton, sugar, etc. which is not so much due to shortages of these commodities but mainly to speculative activity, emphasises the need for setting up effective co-operatives and for vigilance to curb anti-social activities. The scope of the public distribution system has to be widened considerably to include all essential commodities of mass consumption. We must also build buffer stocks of many commodities besides cereals so that we are able to control the price line. We know, from experience, that the most effective method of checking the activities of anti-social middle-men is to organise co-operatives for production, marketing and consumption. I would like to reiterate my appeal to public-spirited citizens all over the country to build up genuine co-operatives, in every village and every *mohalla*, so that men and women of goodwill and dedication everywhere can ensure self-help through mutual help.

Our country has opted for planned development. The essence of planning is the conscious directioning of resources through carefully thought-out programmes. I believe the time has come to review our planning and make it more and more rooted in the local resources, for that is the only way to raise the standard of living of the people, especially the less-privileged sections of the society. Implementation of such plans calls for increased mobilisation of resources both human and material. This will require ruthless cutting down of conspicuous consumption and extravagant expenditure. The ideals of simplicity and austerity, to which we always pay lip sympathy, must become a way of life with us. It is a pity that our richer classes are blindly copying the life styles of the affluent societies of the West and the industrial structure is largely oriented to meeting

the insatiable needs of the small minority. This untenable concept must change and the industry must be made to produce articles of mass consumption at reasonable prices. Growth, equity and self-reliance, which are the cherished goals of our planning process, are capable of achievement when there is not only a sense of involvement and dedication on the part of all citizens, but also that equal opportunities for all are ensured. I am confident that these will be forthcoming in ample measure to take our country forward in its quest for a just and equitable society.

It is the historic responsibility of the present generation to inspire a sense of security and self-confidence in the minds of all citizens irrespective of caste, community or region. A positive force that can contribute to our development is the spirit of healthy nationalism which refuses encouragement to fissiparous tendencies. India must live before India can grow and successfully tackle the immense problems of poverty, ignorance, ill-health that face her at present. National integration is as basic to her survival as it is for her development. We must transcend the divisive forces of casteism, communalism, linguism and regionalism and forge not merely political unity but the unity of minds and hearts of all our peoples. In spite of vast size and immense diversity, India has maintained through the ages the concept of unity and identity and has tried to blend, out of many cultural elements, a rich and harmonious national ethos. I appeal to all our people to uphold and foster this great tradition and make India prosperous and happy.

Friends, I have an abiding faith in the great destiny that awaits our motherland. The innate goodness of our people and their capacity to face challenges from within and without have stood many tests and have emerged with added strength. We have abundant human and material resources. Let us on this day resolve through consent and co-operation to build in this ancient land of ours a new social order free from rancour and exploitation and friendly to all mankind.



Neelam Sanjiva Reddy

(25 07 1977 to 25 07.1982)

Face Problems with Courage

A VERY EVENTFUL year has just passed. The common man has reaffirmed his belief in democratic values and restored our distinction as the largest living democracy in the world. On this occasion each one of us has to ask ourselves in all humility whether we have followed the inspiring example set by the leaders of this ancient land. Have we comprehended the new national ethos and adequately responded to it? In this context, it is disappointing that the professional classes as well as business and industry have not shown sufficient evidence of their being prepared to accept their share of national responsibility.

The future is unfolding itself. What are our immediate preoccupations and aspirations for the future? The coming elections to the State Assemblies afford an occasion for all political parties to prove their dedication to democracy and cleanliness in public life. What is important is not the result but how it is achieved. The campaign must be conducted with dignity, only on the basis of clear cut programmes and policies.

Once again our voters will have the option of choosing not their masters, but their servants. We must, as in the past, prove ourselves a mature people, pledged to the processes of democracy and the democratic way of life. Our people should be enabled to exercise their franchise without let or hindrance. My Government will guarantee this, the basic birth right of every eligible voter. Let the free will of the people prevail, and all will be well, whatever the result. This is my firm belief.

Many problems loom large on the horizon. We must face them with courage and self confidence. Some frustrated

and desperate elements in our society today are determined to scuttle the principles of our democratic way of life and destroy the very fabric of our secular society. While everyone of us is entitled to freedom of expression in appropriate forums, no one should be permitted to drag each and every issue to the streets, excite dormant passions, advocate disrespect for law and order and incite violence. Such a policy of unwarranted confrontation backed by provocative action on the slightest pretext is a challenge we as citizens of a free country need to face with determination. Let not a few misguided and disgruntled sections of society imagine that they can hold the rest of us, the law-abiding citizens, to ransom. Swift and stern action will be taken against anyone acting in a manner prejudicial to the national interest. Our founding fathers, among whom were the great Mahatma, the far-sighted Panditji and the indomitable Sardar, won us political freedom, and laid solid foundations for our economic advancement. Are we to allow all this to be nullified by the unconscionable behaviour of an irresponsible few? Freedom may yet be in peril. Let us defend it with all the might at our disposal.

The post-emergency climate has been congenial for reconciling fundamental freedoms and open society with egalitarianism and social justice. This is the first Republic Day with which my ten-month old Government is associated. Let us not judge them hastily. Let us rather take note of what has been achieved. It has resorted to public life the essential attributes of a mature democracy. On the economic front, my Government has sought to concretise the Gandhian concept of employment-oriented rural development and to bridge the socio-economic disparity between the urban and the rural areas.

For the first time since independence, our political life is not dominated by one monolithic political party. Today, men of good conscience, but with varying shades of political opinion, are working together for the good of the nation. This is in itself a great achievement. Let us not isolate and exaggerate honest differences of opinion and, unwittingly

perhaps, undermine the principles of collective responsibility on which good government is based. For once in our history, we stand united as a nation. India is one country, and Indians are one people. Let no one underestimate our strength or take us for granted.

Our continued progress on the agricultural front and our determination to reach the benefits of planned development to the rural areas, and to the economically weaker sections of society, will better the quality of life of millions of our countrymen. This requires resolute political will and determined administrative action. To our sound and broad based scientific and technological achievements, which have been acknowledged all the world over, we have handsomely coupled research and development to take care of the future. Today, we are recognised as one of the ten most industrially advanced nations in the world.

India's very significant manpower contribution to the United Nations pool of technical and administrative talent and experience is matched only by our bilateral technical assistance programmes to our friends in Africa, South East Asia and West Asia. While we may take justifiable pride in these achievements, we must guard against complacency in thought and action. On the other hand, we must forge ahead with hard dedicated work and the determination to succeed not only as individuals but as a nation.

Our administration, relieved of its recent traumatic experience, is fortunate to have firm dynamic political leadership. The younger generation, who join the various services which compose the broad spectrum of the administration, are idealistic, motivated and have the capacity for hard work. Let us forge out of these qualities a result oriented instrument to implement our plans for the future and to build the India of our dreams. Those in the administration who act without fear or favour in the national interest will have nothing to fear.

Let us not forget that in this country, where the majority live below the poverty line, even the lowest paid

industrial worker whether in the public or private sector or government service, is a privileged citizen. Is it not morally wrong to confer on these relatively privileged classes additional benefits merely because they are organised and vociferous? Can we ignore the large majority because they are unorganised and inarticulate?

The inconvenience resulting from shortages and price increase must, in all fairness, be shared by all. If this is to be done, there is no escape from a start being made in limiting profits, eliminating all forms of conspicuous consumption and dealing sternly with those who commit economic and social crimes. We have to develop a new administrative culture and imbue the administration with discipline and dedication and make it responsive to the people's problems and aspirations. Only then will the benefits of planned development percolate to the grass roots of our society.

On an occasion like this, one is struck by the cohesive unity of our country, in spite of several apparent diversities. Not even during the times of Ashoka or Akbar, was India politically one. The Britishers with their might and skill moulded us into one large political entity. Europe consists of several nations. Can attempts now to bring them together and make one Europe succeed? Our country, which is a sub-continent, should not be allowed to break up on any issue, much less on inconsequential and sentimental issues. History has cast upon us the onerous responsibility of maintaining and strengthening the unity and vitality of our great nation. I am convinced that we can achieve this through mutual goodwill and understanding. Let us, therefore, resolve that no considerations, no issues and no forces will be allowed to impair our basic unit and richness of culture and heritage.

We are pledged to the concept of federalism. During the recent Conference of Governors, I was happy to see that there was a great measure of harmony between the Central Government and the State Governments run by different

political parties Let us not forget that some of our leaders in the States are men of distinction with a long record of service to the country If our political parties realise that despite their differences, they can work together for the common good of the people, and evolve agreement on major issues, problems of socio economic development within a democratic framework would become less difficult All our political parties are committed to the speedy elimination of poverty, social injustice and exploitation The Harijans, the minorities and the economically vulnerable sections of society must be encouraged to increasingly participate in the mainstream of the national life

Since the launching of our First Five Year Plan, our agricultural production, industrial production and exports have increased by about 200 per cent, 400 per cent, and 800 per cent respectively This is no doubt an impressive achievement But the gains of development are nullified by the explosive growth of population This vital national problem brooks no delay It is the duty of all political parties to concertedly endeavour to prevent this national catastrophe

On this occasion, I cannot but express the nation's gratitude to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, who is one of the few living symbols of the Gandhian era Let us all pray for his good health and long life to guide us in the years to come Today we salute our defence services who stand guard on our borders and guarantee our territorial integrity Their courage and valour in the face of several hardships deserve our admiration and gratitude Friends, I have an abiding faith in the great future that awaits India On this historic day, let us all rededicate ourselves to the formidable tasks which face the country and enter confidently into an era of hope, freedom and achievement

Bend Energies to Achieve Goals

TOMORROW WE WILL celebrate the thirtieth Republic Day. On this auspicious occasion, I am happy to greet you all, my fellow citizens at home and abroad, and convey to you my good wishes. This is no doubt a joyous occasion and we celebrate it with all enthusiasm. But this is also an occasion for calm introspection about where we stand and in what direction we are going.

A few years back, our country was suffering from a deficit in foodgrains and some people abroad had written us off as a country which "could not be saved". In their view, our agriculture had no future and we would be exposed to recurring famines. These prophets of gloom had reckoned without our indefatigable *kisan* and they have been proved false. This country which was producing 5.5 crore tonnes of foodgrains in 1950 has now reached a level of over 12.5 crore tonnes, inspite of floods and other natural calamities in several parts of the country. The credit for this goes to the *kisans*, the vast majority of whom are small and marginal farmers. The developmental efforts over the last 30 years, which have been channelised by successive Five Year Plans, have resulted in the execution of many major, medium and minor irrigation projects all over the country. The assured water supply from these projects as well as production of fertilizers, pesticides and high-yielding strains have all aided the *kisan* in ushering in an era of plenty. Because of the record output of foodgrains and industrial raw materials, we have been able to achieve a measure of price stability and contain inflation. Food sufficiency is among the major factors that have helped the country to sustain and strengthen its political and economic independence.

We cannot, however, afford to be complacent. In the coming years, we will have to place agriculture on a sounder and more viable base. We will have to assure fair prices for the farmers' produce and reduce the cost of inputs that will encourage the farmer to work harder and show better results. There has to be an intensive study of the agro-ecology of every area, and we must build up self-reliance of each area in order to ensure the full development of its potential. If farmers, scientists, extension workers, developmental administrators, mass media agencies and, above all, our political leaders will all work together, we can soon regain the old image of our country as a land full of milk and honey.

While this achievement is certainly within our reach, a radical change in the entire value system of our urban societies is essential for attaining this goal. The brain drain and the depletion of resources from the village to the city must not only be stopped, but must be reversed. The imperative need is for a happy combination of brain and brawn for achieving the rural prosperity. Those living in villages and our scientists and technologists who choose to work in villages, must be provided with adequate facilities. The basic minimum needs of the rural people must be fulfilled without further delay. In the welter of demands and agitations by the urban pressure groups for an ever-increasing share in the national cake, the needs of the poor farmer, the real producer of wealth in our country, are apt to be overlooked. Let us not forget that India will prosper only if the tiller of the soil lives and prospers.

Our hard-working peasantry have proved time and again that they are ready to adopt new technology, provided they are helped to do so. It is now the responsibility of every citizen in this country to ensure that our farmers are able to produce more food from less land. This presupposes considerable attention in safeguarding our basic agricultural assets, like soil, water, flora and fauna, so that productivity can be improved without harming the long-term production potential of soil and water.

I have had occasion to fly over the Himalayas in recent months and I was shocked to see the extent of deforestation that has taken place. What was once verdant greenery has been reduced to barren rocks. Such denudation and the resultant soil erosion pose a grave danger to our future. Floods and droughts are caused by thoughtless destruction of forests. We should ensure that in our zeal to bring more land under the plough we do not disturb the delicate balance of nature. We need to create new forest belts to be maintained in perpetuity. I am happy that the State Governments are now imposing restrictions on the felling of trees and preventing further denudation of forest areas. But this is largely a matter for community involvement and initiative and I hope our people, particularly in the rural areas, will take up this work in right earnest.

If today many people still go without enough food, it is not because of lack of food but rather because of lack of purchasing power. Hence, our agricultural plans will have to aim at generating more and more employment in the rural areas, in addition to providing food for our growing population. Because of the rapid growth of population, the pressure on the available cultivable land is increasing and it will not be possible to provide land for all the landless. It will be necessary to employ them gainfully in other occupations. The only way to tackle this problem is to plan for a massive growth of agro-based small-scale and cottage industries. Without thriving rural industries, our agriculture cannot prosper.

If we choose this pathway of action, we can certainly create a new India where no man, woman or child will go to bed hungry. 1979 is also the International Year of the Child. Let us make a beginning by saving our children from hunger. I have complete faith in the ability of our farmers and scientists to bring about this great and desirable change if only there is the requisite political will and social action to assist them to their work.

I would like on this occasion to reiterate India's policy

of friendship and goodwill towards all nations, particularly towards our neighbours. We believe in peace and peaceful co-existence among nations. But we must always be prepared to defend, with all our might, our hard-won freedom and the integrity and sovereignty of our motherland. In recent months I had many opportunities of witnessing the preparedness of our Army, Navy and Air Force. I would like to pay my tribute to the high sense of dedication and discipline that prevails in our Armed Forces. Their courage and valour in the face of hardships and their services in times of natural calamities deserve our admiration and gratitude.

Friends, I would appeal to you all to desist from controversies and confrontations but bend all your energies towards the achievement of the goals that we have set before ourselves. Anything that diverts the nation's attention or tends to divide it hurts us all. In unity of purpose and action lies our strength. May God guide us on the right path of harmony and hard work.

Determined to Succeed

AS WE PREPARE to celebrate our thirty-first Republic Day tomorrow, I send you all my fellow citizens at home and abroad my good wishes. In the eventful years which have gone by, we have faced formidable tasks of magnitude and complexity. Our achievements over a broad spectrum of nation building activity have been substantial in spite of difficulties. While there is certainly no justification for complacency, there is also no reason for despondency. It would be idle to pretend that we do not face complex situations in the various aspects of socio-economic activity relating to the welfare and well-being of our people. We

must not, however, be disheartened or lose faith in ourselves at this critical moment in our history. We have demonstrated great resilience and innate strength of character in the past. We can do so again. And so, as we march onwards into the 1980s, let us go forward with a sense of achievement, a quiet confidence, and the will to succeed. Let us face the challenge of the future with the courage and determination worthy of a great people. Let us also not fail to grasp the opportunities that the future offers to us to usher in an era of peace and prosperity.

The elections to our Parliament have been completed in a peaceful and orderly manner. This vast and complex exercise, which has been universally acclaimed, has been successfully completed because of our abiding faith in the democratic way of life and an objective appreciation of the process by which the smooth and peaceful transfer of power is possible through the ballot box. This is indeed a tribute to the maturity and wisdom of our people, who have risen to the occasion, and shown to the world community that our electorate has a mind of its own. Posterity will record this achievement as yet another glorious land mark in our country's history. Succeeding generations will draw inspiration from the manner in which we have conducted ourselves as a mature nation.

Our voters deserve to be congratulated for having exercised their franchise without fear or favour and in an orderly and peaceful manner, worthy of the best democratic traditions anywhere in the world, past or present. The Government has been voted into power with a massive mandate from our people. Let us wish them well in their efforts to come to grips with the many challenging tasks which lie ahead. Every one of our citizens is a partner in this existing adventure to usher in an era of peace and prosperity. What is of paramount importance in this context is the creation of goodwill and harmony. We need to build bridges of understanding and enlist the support and co-operation of various shades of thought and opinion.

The tasks that lie ahead of us in the immediate present

and in the not too distant future require discipline and a sense of purpose. Such national awareness will unite, blend and provide direction for our talent and energy in the service of the nation and our people. We need to be united and strong of home, if we are to make our counsel heard in the world community of nations. A strong and determined India dedicated to the cause of peace and international understanding is a bulwark for peace in the troubled world of today. It is this onerous responsibility which is cast on us.

I shall not recount in detail the enormous and complex problems which face us. We all know them well enough. None of these are incapable of solution. We need to dedicate ourselves individually and collectively to the national effort. The future, however, gloomy it may appear just now, has a silver lining if we will look for it. Let us march forward into the future shoulder to shoulder with hope and the determination to succeed.

Bright Future with Self Discipline

TOMORROW IS THE thirty second Republic Day. I take this opportunity to greet our countrymen at home and abroad and convey my best wishes for the future.

The Republic Day is a joyous occasion in the history of our nation. It gives us an opportunity to count the blessings of our freedom, to look back at our achievements with satisfaction and ponder over our shortcomings, so that we can face the future with greater confidence.

We are a relatively young Republic, although we

represent one of the ancient civilisations of the world. Since our independence, democracy has taken deep roots in our soil and the electorate has become increasingly assertive over issues of public welfare. A better awareness on the part of the people of their rights and obligations in a free society is perhaps the best guarantee for successful functioning of our democratic system. But we have to put greater content into our freedom to make it more meaningful for the majority of our people living below the poverty line. The real challenge today for any developing society like ours is how to combine economic growth with social justice. We have to shape our future in such a way that all sections of our people can reap the fruits of our progress in an atmosphere of freedom.

The planning process has come to stay as an integral part of our socio-economic philosophy. The country has made impressive progress in the field of agriculture and the nation owes a deep gratitude to its farmers for bringing about the Green Revolution. In the industrial sphere, too, sound foundations have been laid for sustained growth and increased self-reliance. However, the country has still to overcome many hurdles before it can reach self-sufficiency in all vital spheres, learning through trial and error, as we move towards new horizons.

I am happy to note that the general economic situation has begun to show some positive signs of improvement after a period of stagnation. Production in core sectors like coal and power is taking an upward curve. As a result of some timely steps taken by the Government, the availability of essential supplies has somewhat improved and the price situation also is showing some signs of stability. But a lot more needs to be done for increasing production, ensuring better distribution and containing inflation.

The country is passing through a difficult decade and it has to keep pace with the velocity of change the world over to be able to cope with the mounting challenges of orderly development. The task of combining economic growth and social justice cannot be tackled by the

Government without the unstinted co operation of all sections of the people I, therefore, appeal to all political parties including the ruling parties to rise above controversy and treat the problems of public welfare as a national responsibility that concerns all of them. The living standards of the people, whether in towns or villages, cannot be improved without increased agricultural and industrial production. In the present inflationary situation it is the duty of every political party and every citizen to co operate in discouraging strikes and agitations to keep up production in all vital spheres. It is the poor that are hit the hardest by economic disruption, since shortages inevitably lead to high prices causing widespread privation.

It is sad to see even employees with four figure incomes resorting to strikes to hold the country to ransom and compel the Government to concede their demands with threats of further dislocation. The political parties must not encourage industrial unrest and impede production at a time when the country is faced with many difficult problems. They must make this positive contribution to the economic recovery of the country by pledging their full co operation. The organised labour, too, must play its part, with people in the higher income groups eschewing strikes as a first step towards better industrial relations.

As a developing society trying to catch up with the missed opportunities of the past, India has been going through what one might call a churning process out of which the country is bound to emerge stronger with greater faith in its future. We have yet to learn the hard way that reconciliation is more constructive than recrimination. The country has the capacity to opt for creative alternatives to some of these legacies of the past.

The eighties have begun with greater ferment and renewed tensions in our region, which pose a threat to our ability to develop in conditions of continued stability and peace. The Government has been repeatedly cautioning the people against these dangers and doing its best to restore normalcy in the region.

As I speak to you tonight, my thoughts go to the valiant *jawans* guarding our frontiers. But the common people have an equally important role to play in preserving the country's internal security without which it is impossible to ensure its external defence. The maintenance of law and order is as important as increased productivity for the welfare of the people. As we enter another year of our Republic's life, let us all rededicate ourselves to the task of self-discipline to strive for greater unity, tolerance and compassion in tackling our problems.

Better Living for our People

TOMORROW WE CELEBRATE the thirty-third Republic Day. On this auspicious occasion I am happy to greet you, fellow citizens, and convey my good wishes to you all. On this occasion, I wish to share with you my happiness about the country's achievements during the past thirty years and also my concern about some aspects of our national life.

As we look back over the country's record, we find many things to be pleased about. Foodgrains production has increased from about 55 million tonnes to over 130 million tonnes. Considerable industrial capacity has been created in capital, intermediate and consumer goods as well as in infrastructural facilities. We are self-sufficient in several fields of technology and our technical men are working in different parts of the world with distinction. We are making progress in the use of nuclear power to supplement conventional sources of energy and we have made a beginning in space technology as well. Our domestic oil production has gone up considerably in the last twenty

years and is likely to increase further We can be rightly proud of these achievements

At the same time there are many features in the economy which cannot but cause concern Over Rs 90,000 crores have been invested in the Five Year Plans, which works out to almost 100 rupees per person per year But the fruits of development are beyond the reach of a large number Unemployment and under employment continue to dog us The increases in per capita incomes or per capita availability of many essential articles are far short of the goals we had set for ourselves and the expectations aroused in the early years of planning There is no doubt that the large increase in population neutralises a great deal of the benefits of development The numerous external challenges to our territorial integrity have similarly come in the way of our endeavours Yet, if only the installed capacities had been utilised with greater efficiency, there would have been much more to show for the investments made It is, therefore, necessary to pay greater attention to this aspect We all know that the basic problems of India were not created in a day and cannot be solved in a day It is all the greater reason why we must exert ourselves to overcome our national shortcomings

In recent months the infrastructure has performed better and industrial production has risen, thanks to the combined efforts of workers and managers The annual harvest has also been good The wholesale price index has also shown improvement but this is yet to be reflected in retail prices, which continue to cause anxiety to Government and people alike The public distribution system is being enlarged, but a sizeable number, especially in the countryside, are still outside its purview Even the knowledge that inflation is a global phenomenon caused by the rapid rise of oil prices does not lighten this burden They might be willing to put up the hardship if they see a climate of austerity and simple living around them Popular feeling will naturally view with disfavour not only conspicuous consumption by the affluent but any public expenditure

which is not directly related to development or to the defence of the nation.

I spent six years during the last decade working in the fields in my village and have this added to my earlier practical experience of rural life. I am convinced that conditions of living in rural areas and the hardships of the small farmers and of agricultural labourers need much greater attention. During some agricultural operations, farmers have to work in their fields, whatever be the weather and whatever be the time of the day or night. Very often the entire family, including women and children are obliged to work. Most holdings are and have always been well below the limits fixed under the ceilings legislation. The Indian farmer is among the hardest working in the world. The physical and financial hazards he runs are innumerable. Long months of toil may be nullified by pests or diseases or natural calamities. The income derived is far less than what many other sections earn with far less exertion. In most countries the farmer is at a similar disadvantage. In our country which is bound to remain predominantly agricultural the problem of the farmer must receive priority. I have personal experience of how acute the problem of unemployment is in rural areas. I remember vividly the look of dejection on the faces of agricultural labourers, who after walking a few miles in vain in search of work had often to come back disappointed. I have known villages the residents of which have a walk a few miles daily to get a pot of drinking water. The programmes for the provision of drinking water as well as rural health and education facilities should be speeded up. The conditions in urban areas are hardly better. Urban population, as in all developing countries, is growing faster than expansion of civic services and amenities. Large numbers of our urban poor live in squalor, with only precarious employment. Our attention is mostly devoted to placating organised vociferous groups of society. While such groups may enjoy the special benefits and facilities available to them, I cannot help observing that there are many times that number who are much worse off in every respect.

I must refer here to the growing tendency to violence that has been manifesting itself in recent years in some parts of the country. Values and sanctions which had in the past enabled us to live together in peace appear to be losing their hold. Respect for law and order and sanctity of life and property seem no longer to guide our conduct. Most of you, like me, feel perturbed by frequent instances of atrocities on the weak and the innocent and wanton damage to property. Using all the means available to it, I am sure the Government will endeavour to curb the trend to violence and to restore a sense of security to the citizen.

I had the privilege of having been a member of the Constituent Assembly. Some of the ablest men of our country had been engaged in the drafting of our Constitution and, in doing so, they had drawn upon the experience of the working of democratic institutions elsewhere. We have reason to feel satisfied that our democratic system has been working satisfactorily. The Constitution which is supreme has spelt out the role of the different agencies created by it. It behoves them all to work within the respective spheres allotted to them and confine themselves to the role assigned to them, observing in letter and spirit the constitutional provisions. Any attempt to transgress the limits imposed by it can only lead to confusion. The sad experience of countries which have been subject to continued political turmoil must serve as a warning to us. In the faithful working by all of us of the Constitution, which we have given unto ourselves, lies the guarantee of the nation's political stability.

The essence of the democratic system is that problems are discussed and debated by the people's representatives and decisions are taken on the basis of a broad measure of agreement. The views of the opposition, who too represent a sizeable section of the people, ought to be given due consideration. The opposition, on its part, is expected to be reasonable and responsible in its approach. For the healthy functioning of a democracy, a strong and responsible opposition is a pre-requisite. We have to cultivate those

habits of mind required for the successful working of democracy. Qualities of restraint and moderation and a spirit of accommodation and compromise need to be cultivated by all of us to make the system work. We must draw upon our deeper resources of wisdom and make a success of our democratic form of Government.

It is just over sixty years since Mahatmaji launched his Non-Cooperation Movement. Only a little over 50 years since he launched the Salt Satyagraha Movement and about 40 years since he gave the call for the Quit India Movement in the fight for India's freedom. Thousands and thousands of our countrymen took part in these movements. Some of them gave up lucrative careers. There were many who participated in the movement and were reduced to a state of penury. They responded to Gandhiji's call, unmindful of the suffering and sacrifice it entailed and without expecting any reward for themselves in their life time. What we find today is the very antithesis of the noble spirit that animated the nation only a few decades ago. Why is it that this permissive attitude has overtaken our society in the short span of a few decades? Have we of the older generation set a wrong example to the country by our life and conduct?

I have spoken at length about the disturbing features of the national scene because, unless we take immediate action to arrest the disregard of moral values in public life, people's faith in our political system will be undermined with consequences which are too frightening to contemplate. May I fervently appeal to all political parties to do some heart-searching and endeavour to bring about a regeneration of moral values in our public life?

And may I also add that my faith in the soundness of our people is undimmed? They have a proven capacity to overcome their problems. Where the defence of freedom of national integrity is concerned, I am sure that our people will never be found wanting. This is a heartening feeling at a moment when the international situation is so full of dangers and forebodings.

In recent months, I had many opportunities of meeting officers and men of our armed forces. I visited them at remote places like Ladakh, Nathula, Tawang and other border areas and talked to them. They are full of cheer and courage. These men who serve in inaccessible areas enduring inhospitable climate, who stand sentinel over the country's borders, deserve our admiration and gratitude.

In six months from now I shall demit office as President of India and this is the last occasion on which I shall be speaking to you on a national day. I am grateful to all sections of the people for the affection shown towards me. May Providence crown with success our efforts to create better conditions of living for our people.



Giani Zail Singh

(25.07.1982 to 25.07.1987)

Work with Vigour and Devotion

TOMORROW WE CELEBRATE our thirty-fourth Republic Day On this happy occasion, I greet you all my countrymen, at home and abroad and convey my best wishes I pray to God to bless your efforts and bestow success on you

This day, 53 years ago, the people of India took the pledge to fight for *Purna Swaraj* from foreign rule Very fittingly, when we achieved freedom and framed a Constitution for our new polity, this date was chosen for our nascent Republic to formally come into being On this occasion, I recall the sufferings and sacrifices of millions of our countrymen in the cause of freedom and pay my respectful homage to their memory I also recall the statesmanship and vision of our leaders assembled in the Constituent Assembly, who gave us the Constitution and set the direction for our growth as a free nation The founding fathers of our Constitution enshrined in this document, in the true tradition of our history and culture, the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy We can take legitimate pride that despite many obstacles we as a nation have held fast to these principles Indeed, over these thirty-three years it has been our constant endeavour to give concrete meaning to these principles and strengthen their relevance in fulfilling the aspirations of the common man

Our Republic has chosen the path of planned economic development so that the benefits of freedom reach the common man We have made commendable progress in the successive Five Year Plan periods The economy today rests upon a sound infrastructure supported by an ever widening scientific and technological base The country's capability to feed, clothe and house the growing population has

increased substantially. The quality of life today for an average citizen is much better than it was at the time of independence. The fact that this has been achieved within the framework of democracy and against heavy odds is an eloquent testimony to the inherent vitality and ability of our political and economic system. There is, however, no scope for complacency. Freedom is not complete as Mahatma Gandhi has told us, until we are able to wipe the tears from every eye. Nor can we rest content until we have achieved the eradication of inequality and caste consciousness, in consonance with the message given to us by the Father of the Nation. In the accomplishment of this task, the active co-operation of one and all is needed. The country needs more production. Our economy must attain the tempo of self-sustaining growth. I appeal to all people engaged in the fields, factories, laboratories, educational institutions, government offices or any other sphere of activity to work with vigour and devotion for the success of this endeavour. Let us not fall prey to disruptive influences and weaken the nation's resolve to march ahead. Let us not also do anything which may frustrate the youth by diverting their energies from constructive channels.

We have inherited a rich and composite cultural heritage, to which contribution has been made, over the centuries, by people professing different faiths, following different customs, and speaking different languages. It is our sacred duty to preserve and enrich this precious heritage based on mutual respect and toleration, trust and goodwill, sacrifice and service to humanity. This indeed has been the basis of our national unity. No nation can be strong unless it is internally united. Let us rise above narrow and parochial considerations and prove ourselves worthy of our noble traditions and live up to the teachings of our seers, saints and gurus, who have throughout our history given us the message of unity, love and goodwill.

We are a peaceful country wedded to a policy of peace and resolved to solve all issues through peaceful means. Our Government believes in maintaining and strengthening

friendly relations with our neighbours as well as other countries. Passion for peace is a tradition with us constituting an integral part of our culture. This desire for peace has motivated us to take an initiative in promoting the international dialogue for achieving a just world economic order, without which stable world peace is not possible.

We shall soon be hosting the Conference of Heads of Governments of Non-Aligned Countries in New Delhi. The Non Aligned Movement has been a major factor of peace in the world. It is a matter of pride for our country that our first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was one of its founding fathers.

Before I conclude, may I appeal to you all my fellow citizens to preserve and strengthen, by works and deeds, the unity and cohesion of our Nation? There is no achievement beyond our capacity if we stand united and determined. Our success in organising the IXth Asiad Games within a record time and despite many odds can do us proud. So also the recent success of our scientists and technologists in the Second Antarctica Expedition. With such spirit of adventure and dedication we shall surely march ahead.

Attaining New Heights

ON THE HAPPY occasion of celebrating our thirty fifth Republic Day tomorrow, I greet all my countrymen at home and abroad and convey my best wishes.

Our Republic, with a democratic Constitution chosen by our founding fathers, took a concrete shape on January 26, 1950. Since then, these thirty four years have constituted a period of growth. What has been witnessed is a most

thrilling event—emergence of free India into the world after a long spell of subjugation. In the history of the world, there is hardly a parallel with the story of India's freedom struggle. I recall on this occasion the untold and supreme sufferings and sacrifices of millions of our countrymen in the cause of independence and pay my respectful homage to their memory. I also recall the statesmanship and far-sightedness of our leaders who framed our Constitution and gave us a sense of direction for our growth and progress. Reflecting the essence of our age old traditions and values, the Constitution became our sheet-anchor for socialism, secularism and democracy. Now we have with us the benefit of more than three decades of experience in the working of our polity and our people deserve to be congratulated for their steadfast adherence to the path of peace and progress with a high degree of maturity and wisdom. India has emerged as a nation of hope and confidence on the world scene.

I had referred to the many gains made by India when I spoke to you last year this day. Since then, there have been further achievements to enable us to claim that we are well set in the right direction in our battle against poverty. I feel that this is an appropriate occasion for us to recall some of these achievements and hope that we march ahead with greater confidence.

Oriented towards 'growth with social justice', the basic strategy of our planning for development may be said to be yielding encouraging results, judged by the main indicators. It is a matter of pride that during the last three years India achieved a real growth of 5 per cent per annum in gross domestic product, while the economic conditions in the world were generally characterised by low growth rates, high rates of inflation and unemployment. Our economy is forging ahead with a significant increase in employment which has been higher than the rate of growth of the labour force in the country.

The progress achieved so far has become possible by the consistent efforts made to develop a sound base in

science and technology The technology policy of the Government aims at rapid development of self-reliance, promoting indigenous science and technology, appropriate adaptation of imported technologies and ensuring transfer of technology for efficient application Our achievements in nuclear, space and oceanic research speak eloquently of the path we have chosen and of the determination and sincerity of our scientific community The INSAT-1B circling the earth, the Third Antarctica Expedition on the frozen continent and the Oceanic Research Vessel 'Sagar Kanya' delving deep into the mysteries of the ocean, are there for us all to feel proud of and to derive inspiration from

In the field of agriculture, India has taken noticeable strides Foodgrains production in 1983-84 is expected to reach a new peak and exceed the level of 142 million tonnes, with honours being shared for the increase both by *kharif* and *rabi* harvests Similar advances have been made by the industrial sector too, ably assisted and supported by a sound infrastructure A matter of great importance to the economy is the growing self-sufficiency in respect of production of crude oil and refining capacity

The increased tempo of activities witnessed in recent years needs to be sustained and maintained at a higher level I appeal to all people, working in farms, factories, laboratories, educational institutions, government offices or anywhere else to work with redoubled vigour and a missionary zeal We cannot afford to lose any time as we are engaged in the struggle against poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance

This brings me to some disquieting developments in some parts of the country I feel a deep concern over the violence taking place and the manner in which agitations are being conducted There is no place for violence in a democracy It is painful to see that violence is resorted to in the name of religion I would like to reiterate that there is no issue which cannot be solved through peaceful discussions Respect for other religious faiths and toleration

towards others are our ancient traditions. In my tours across the length and breadth of the country, I have witnessed the spirit of brotherhood and affection guiding the lives of people. This should not be disturbed for narrow ends, for, any vacuum created thus will undermine our hard-won freedom. I appeal to all of you to rise above all regional, communal, linguistic, religious and other considerations and work for a united and strong India.

I had referred to the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit in my Independence Day address to you. In November 1983, India played host to the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting. These two international meets on our soil have helped to strengthen the force of peace and stability in a tension-ridden world, beset at the moment with grave problems threatening the very existence of mankind. Consistent with our internal efforts to raise the standard of living of our people, especially the weaker sections, externally we have taken the initiative to promote a North-South dialogue in order to bring a new international economic order based on equality and justice, while recognising the need to move rapidly towards the goal of collective self-reliance among developing countries. The Declaration of South Asian Regional Co-operation adopted by the seven South Asian countries in New Delhi has been a good step in this direction.

Our ever alert and vigilant defence services are symbolic of our unity and discipline. They deserve the nation's appreciation for their sense of patriotism and devotion to duty.

With these words, I would like to conclude by once again appealing to you that we should strive hard with courage and self-confidence to strengthen our unity and scale new peaks of achievement in future.

Generate Environment of Love and Cooperation

WE CELEBRATE OUR thirty sixth Republic Day tomorrow On this occasion, I greet you all, my fellow citizens, and convey my best wishes

The Republic Day is a day of special significance in the life of our nation On this day 35 years ago, a Constitution given by the founding fathers came into effect The Preamble, which epitomises the intent and spirit of this Constitution, underscores the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy

In pursuance of this the Constitution safeguards and directs for all citizens justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity

During these years we have made considerable progress and achieved a great measure of political justice However, in the matter of affording economic and social justice and equality of status and opportunity more remains to be done

To fulfil this promise, the pace of economic progress needs to be accelerated and the benefits of progress have to reach the weaker sections of our people

I appeal to all citizens on this occasion to remember that the Constitution gives them certain rights as well as duties While they should remain vigilant in protecting their rights, they should also be devoted to the performance of their duties

The last year was one of great trials for our country Our federal polity was subjected to an acid test The cult of violence culminated in the most tragic assassination of

our beloved Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

She was not only one of the greatest Indian leaders of the present century, but undoubtedly an outstanding statesperson of all times. Her untimely demise was traumatic for the nation. People of India are fortunate that in spite of such a grave situation, the country's political system, dynamic and resilient as it is, remained resolutely unshaken and our outlook unaltered.

The year ended on a note of hope with the electorate's clear verdict in the peaceful elections to the eighth Lok Sabha last month. The vigour and maturity of our democratic tradition were vindicated.

We in India can feel justifiably proud of our composite cultural heritage, characterized by tolerance and respect for one another and commitment to a peaceful and democratic way of life. It was in this land that the welfare of humanity as a whole, *sarve janah sukhino bhavantu* was proclaimed as the supreme ideal, influencing the people's outlook.

The greatness of our society was achieved not by the victories of groups or factions over each other but by reconciliation—a synthesis which enriched and fostered a composite culture. Let us all join together and add to this precious heritage.

This country belongs to all of us, irrespective of religion, language, colour or creed, and we are all its proud citizens.

The principal role of every religion in the context of development of civilization has been to generate spiritualism. However, it is painful to see that in the name of religion, basic tenets and teachings are distorted by overzealous defenders of faith, giving birth to communalism.

Before Independence, an accusing finger could be pointed at the foreign rulers for the scourge of communalism. After Independence, we have to ask ourselves why the malaise persists.

Communalism has not only reduced the respect for

religion, but even diminished the sanctity of religious places. What is most distressing is that some amongst our youth on whom rests the future of the country, are also succumbing to the evil Communal riots instigated by a mischievous few cause untold misery and suffering to large numbers of innocent people.

In a multi religious society like ours, communalism can be the greatest hurdle in the economic progress and political stability of the country.

India's foreign policy remains anchored to peace and non alignment. In the previous year, both during my State visits abroad as well as from my meetings with the visiting dignitaries from other countries, I have noticed the respect which India's foreign policy and the weight that the Indian view carries in the international fora. This itself is the barometer of the success of our foreign policy.

As Chairperson of the Non Aligned Movement, India has taken an initiative to convene the Six Nation Summit to make a joint appeal for disarmament. In this context, I am happy that the two major Powers have decided to resume their dialogue on disarmament. I hope that the major Powers realise that nuclear holocaust poses a danger to all humanity and that curbing this danger is a responsibility they owe to each living being.

I have had many opportunities of meeting officers and men of our Armed Forces and other para military security forces, who are serving the nation with dedication. The Army Navy and Air Force are ever vigilant to meet any threat to the country. For this they deserve the appreciation of the nation.

I, sometimes, wonder as to why in this land of saints and philosophers, whose principal message was the attainment of peace within and without, resort to violence should be made to settle differences of opinion.

For centuries we have spread the message of *ahimsa*. I would like to call upon all citizens to generate an

environment in which irrespective of faith, language or region, mutual love and co-operation prevail.

Our Democratic System

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to greet you my fellow citizens on our thirty-seventh Republic Day tomorrow. On this happy occasion, I convey my best wishes to you all.

The Republic Day is a joyous occasion for all of us. It reminds us that we are sovereign people and are makers and masters of our own national destiny. It also gives us an opportunity to evaluate our achievements and to ponder over the tasks yet to be undertaken and completed. A review of this nature helps us to face the future boldly and with greater self-confidence.

Our Republic is based on democracy, socialism and secularism. Tolerance and respect for one another are the hallmarks of our democratic system. A democracy harmonises the various forces at work and takes society towards a common goal. It works through various institutions within the framework of our Constitution. It is the duty of leaders of all political parties and every citizen of the country to ensure that these institutions work properly and harmony is maintained. This will further strengthen our democratic foundations. Since we became a Republic, we have gained rich experience in running democracy successfully.

It is a matter of pride for all of us that our electorate has exercised franchise in a mature and fearless manner and democracy has taken deep roots in our soil. While working within the framework of our Constitution, we have to maintain and strengthen the basic unity of the country. Adhering strictly to democratic ideals, we have to accelerate

our economic progress If we develop any differences, those can be resolved through discussion and mutual goodwill

Political differences should not assume the overtones of hostility or enmity There should be a healthy competition among political parties to formulate better programmes for greater welfare of the masses The verdict of the electorate in a democracy is supreme The will of the people shall prevail We should learn to respect the sovereign wishes of the people with grace and spirit of service

In the year that passed, there were shining examples of the working of our democratic system The Punjab and Assam Accords are models of democratic adjustments that have been welcomed by the people This amply proves the existence of inner cohesion based on eternal values among the people throughout the country

The ruling party and the opposition, whether at the all India level or at the level of States, together represent the collective will of the electorate as partners in the service of the people Our democratic system allows for free expression of views, and this is necessarily reflected through the electoral process

The unity of India comes above all other considerations It is not only the political unity, but the unity of the spirit, sentiment and emotion, the roots of which lie deep in our national consciousness These have been enriched by the teachings of spiritual leaders and guides throughout our history It is based on eternal values like truth, love, compassion, tolerance and respect for others These values have also been enshrined in our Constitution It is, however, unfortunate that some decline in the observance of these values has been evident It gives rise to many undesirable consequences For this decline in values, we can only blame ourselves It is no more possible to escape the responsibility for this in the name of transition People look up to the leaders for high moral standards Let all political parties set high moral values and sustain them with their own actions and deeds

Rule of law is another cardinal principle of our democratic system. It guarantees equal protection of the law to every citizen. It also means the equality of every person before the majesty of the law. It is incumbent on every one to observe the laws. It is also the duty of all law enforcing agencies to implement the laws strictly in the interests of a peace loving society.

The country's economy has done well last year and the future course is well set with the launching of the Seventh Five Year Plan. The Plan calls for a sustained economic growth at 5 per cent per year. For achievement of this objective, a set of programmes and policies have been outlined. It is a matter of happiness to note that the main thrust in the Plan is on the special anti-poverty programmes. Continuance of poverty in any form and in any region is a threat to our stability and unity. Balanced economic growth with justice is a basic feature of our planning process. It is the only answer to meet emerging socio-economic aspirations.

It is gratifying to note that a major objective of the Seventh Plan is to ensure that the growth of employment opportunities is faster than the growth of labour force. The task of the government is to facilitate increased production by promoting smooth relations between labour and capital. They have a vital role to play in the implementation of the Seventh Plan. The relations between management and labour should be such as to minimise avoidable friction which harms the national economy. Let us adhere to our philosophy of planning with the active participation of the people. I appeal to all implementing agencies of the Plan to work whole-heartedly for its success. It should alleviate growing restlessness among the people especially the educated youth in urban and rural areas.

India is one of those countries who are affected most by increasing population. The government and the people should keep this in sight. Measures have to be taken to plan the growth rate. At the same time perspective manpower

planning is of paramount need keeping in view our economic resources, pace of development and the employment opportunities. This is a national problem and should be viewed as such by all sections of the people.

We have continued to strive for peace, disarmament and co-operation with all countries. Our actions are based on principles of non-alignment and the Charter of the United Nations. We have made special efforts to strengthen multilateral co-operation among the countries of our region. The establishment of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation is a step in this direction. The high-level dialogue between the leaders of USSR and USA, which has been opened recently, is also a hopeful sign. I hope it will help to ease tension and the threat of nuclear confrontation. I also hope that the steps taken by our Government to normalise relations with Pakistan and to help in finding a solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka will bear fruit soon.

The continued policy of racial discrimination in South Africa is still a black spot on the face of the human race. I do hope there will soon be light after the dark tunnel.

Our Defence Forces deserve the nation's appreciation for performing the onerous task of guarding our borders as well as assisting the people in natural calamities like floods and cyclones. Keeping with the needs of the time they have increased their professional skills and efficiency and are always vigilant to defend the country from any possible external threat. Their welfare merits the nation's continued attention.

With these words, I conclude by appealing to all of you, my countrymen, to maintain the nation's unity, cherish and preserve our cultural values and contribute our best to the fulfilment of the nation's commitment to secularism, socialism and democracy.

One Country One People

ON THE EVE of our thirty-eighth Republic Day tomorrow, I extend to you all, *my countrymen, my most cordial greetings and warm wishes.*

Republic Day reminds us of the lofty ideals of socialism, secularism and democracy, we set for ourselves. It is also an occasion to rededicate ourselves to the high values of justice, liberty and equality, we solemnly resolved to secure to all the citizens of the Republic.

On this sacred day, my thoughts go to those men and women who went through untold sufferings and made tremendous sacrifices to liberate the country from foreign domination. I pay my respectful homage to their hallowed memory.

It is the foremost duty of every citizen to maintain the unity and defend the integrity of the nation. Our hard-won freedom has to be protected at all costs and the forces of disunity and disruption have to be defeated in their designs. Since I spoke to you on this occasion last year, there has been an escalation in violence in some parts of the country. Communal and divisive forces are threatening to weaken the fabric of our secular society. Our democratic system and federal structure provide the necessary mechanism for people to voice their genuine grievances and seek peaceful solutions. Timely action should be taken to look into the grievances and take remedial action. We should not allow an atmosphere of distrust to develop.

On an occasion like this we should dispassionately take stock of our successes and failures and move forward with hope and determination. Over the past six years, the economy has grown at 5 per cent or higher. Despite persistent drought, our agriculture has demonstrated a

remarkable resilience, and foodgrain production has crossed the 150 million tonnes mark. The country has large stocks of foodgrains which ensure food security. Industrial growth has been buoyant, thanks to the dynamism of the new industries. But at the same time there are certain areas of concern which require our attention like population growth, unemployment, prices, and some persisting social evils. It is not the Government alone nor the people alone who can effectively deal with these problems. It requires the combined efforts of the Government and the people to bring these problems under control.

The real benefits of development can be had in the long run only if we tackle our population growth effectively. In this task the active participation and co-operation of the people have to be enlisted. Family welfare should be developed into a mass movement. Social and attitudinal changes have to be brought about through sustained endeavours. Voluntary organisations have to supplement the efforts of the Government in this regard.

The country is facing a gigantic unemployment problem. The government has taken several measures to generate more employment opportunities both in the urban and rural areas. But the task is so stupendous that some more innovative steps will be needed in the coming years.

Since Independence, we have reversed the ratio of those living above and below the poverty line. Instead of two-thirds, now about 36 per cent of our rural population is living below the poverty line. The programmes for the poor have been substantially stepped up in the recent years. The structure of the society in rural areas is such that the poor are in a highly vulnerable position. They have to be saved from exploitation. It is, therefore, necessary to have massive programmes for the alleviation of poverty and ensure that every rupee that is provided for these programmes confers the intended benefits on the beneficiaries. It is of utmost importance to simultaneously keep a check on the prices.

Acceleration of industrial growth is essential for our

economic development. The balanced growth of agriculture and industry and the production of mass consumption goods of high quality at reasonable prices must remain a central theme of our policies. We should take note of the rise in trade deficit from rupees 5,318 crores during the previous year to rupees 8,616 crores in 1985-86. The exports have started showing a rising trend. We should make sustained efforts to wipe out the trade deficit. I hope our industry will show the necessary dynamism to respond to the needs of the economy.

The Directive Principles of State Policy enjoin upon every Government the obligation to secure a system which may provide children with opportunities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. Children and youth are to be protected against exploitation and moral and material abandonment. In this area, though the country has made commendable progress, there is still great scope for accelerating our efforts to reach the desired goal. Children and youth should be safeguarded from the evil influences of casteism and communalism. They should be enabled to develop an egalitarian outlook and contribute to orderly social change and national reconstruction. It should also keep in focus our obligation to promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes.

Women have always been given a highly respectable place in our society. Though during the last four decades a great deal has been done to curb the social evils like dowry, women are subjected to, there is still much more to be done to secure for them their rightful place in our society as equal partners in our progress and prosperity.

In a country where for centuries the people have set for themselves high spiritual and moral values, it is unfortunate that with the advent of economic progress some people have found it convenient to abandon these values. Adulteration of food and drugs, black marketing, tax evasion and

corruption have become serious problems in our society We must tackle them with determination so that the fruits of progress will be available to one and all equitably

India is the largest democracy in the world We have a significant role to play in international affairs We have consistently taken a bold stand on international issues and raised our voice in favour of the weak, the oppressed and the exploited We have tried to focus world attention on the need for nuclear disarmament as also for imposing mandatory sanctions against the racist regime of South Africa

The recent visit of the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev has reaffirmed our friendship with USSR We appreciate the sincerity and steadfastness of the Soviet Union Ours is, perhaps, the best example of bilateral relationship and enduring co operation In the true spirit of non-alignment, India seeks close and friendly relations with all nations, irrespective of blocks and political systems We shall continue to work for greater cohesion in the Non-Aligned Movement and for greater understanding with our immediate neighbours

The security of the nation is our foremost concern Our Armed Forces have been maintaining constant vigil on our borders, along our long coast line and in our national air space They have been keeping in step with modern defence technology and have been upgrading their skills to face any challenge They have also assisted civil authorities in national calamities and in our hours of need They are a symbol of national unity They deserve the nation's deep appreciation for their high morale, discipline and dedicated service

To conclude, I would like to say, my brothers and sisters, that the Constitution has enjoined upon me as President the duty to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law I have at all times done my best to discharge this duty with devotion I have endeavoured my utmost to maintain and strengthen the unity of India

Let all religions flourish, all cultures blossom and all

regions thrive. But it is of paramount importance for us to remember that we are one country, one nation, one people. To survive as such, we have to rise above all narrow considerations and take pride in our common identity and single entity as Indians. We share a common destiny and must strive to build a brighter future for posterity.



R. Venkataraman

(25.07.1987 to 25.07.1992)

Towards Self-Sufficiency

ON THE EVE of the thirty-ninth Republic Day, I extend to all fellow citizens my warmest greetings and good wishes

We recall on this happy occasion that 38 years ago, our country was welded into a sovereign Democratic Republic assuring our people justice, liberty, equality and the dignity of the individual. From the snows of Kashmir to the pastures of Kanyakumari, from the sand dunes of Kutch to the lush green forests of Assam our people rejoiced over the new era that was dawning upon them.

The renowned Hindi poet, Jayashankar Prasad, whose centenary we are about to celebrate, has captured the spirit of the times in scintillating verse

'From atop the soaring cliffs of
the snow clad Himalayas
Calls the voice of our
resplendent Bharat
O Brave and immortal sons
of mine
Heed the call of Freedom,
Be resolute, take a vow
To march
On the virtuous path that
Opens before you,
Onward, ever onward, march!'

Our leaders knew that *Swaraj* was not so much an arrival as the commencement of a new and arduous journey. The real task lay ahead—the task of providing our people with a better quality of life. Our leaders were fully conscious that political freedom by itself cannot transform a backward society into a prosperous one. Social and economic reforms, therefore, claimed their highest priority.

Working within the canons of parliamentary democracy

Broadcast to the Nation on January 25, 1988

and through the mechanism of planned economic development, India has sought to meet its objectives of social justice with the active participation of the people. The progress the country has achieved over the last four decades is no small achievement. And seen in the context of our steadily increasing population, it is truly commendable.

These four decades have seen India achieve self-sufficiency in food and its efficient distribution among our masses. Our farmers have shown an astonishing ability to take to new farm practices with enthusiasm. They have virtually set an example for the rest of us. I take this opportunity to offer my greetings and felicitations to the farmers of India. May they continue to meet with every success.

The industrial infrastructure has also been firmed up and we are now in the frontline of newly independent countries in the production of basic industrial goods. An impressive rate of overall growth has been registered during the present decade. Not only has there been industrial growth in absolute terms, Indian industry has shown an ability to diversify and to produce goods of considerable sophistication. We now produce consumer goods that satisfy not only our internal but also sophisticated external markets. I would like to offer my felicitations to Indian entrepreneurs in the public and private sectors, large and small, on their continuing enterprise.

And as one who has had a long and cherished association with labour, I would like to emphasise that in this success story the contribution of the working classes has been considerable. The nation owes a deep debt of gratitude to our labour.

Thanks to all these developments we are now approaching the ideal condition of a self-sufficient nation, described in the Tamil classic *Thirukkural* as follows:

“That is an ideal State which is self-sufficient.
That State is no good State which has plenty
by seeking from others.”

It is a matter of no ordinary satisfaction that India has been able to shake off the stagnation of ages and initiate its process of growth without falling into the trapdoor of international debts

All this goes to vindicate the policies and programmes set before the nation by Jawaharlal Nehru. We can legitimately feel proud of our accomplishments in all these fields of human endeavour

Yet, there is no room for complacency. The growing population calls for a greater momentum of growth in food production and other wage goods. The climbing graphs of production must intertwine with the living and working conditions of our masses. The vast segment of people below the poverty line still need to be helped out. It is these people that Gandhiji had in mind when he spoke of the *daridranarayana*. It is these people Acharya Vinoba Bhave had in mind when he started his Bhoodan Movement. It is the same, 'lowly and lost' whom Mother Teresa serves today from the depths of her being.

Our socio economic system must as a whole find ways of reaching these people. I would, in fact, say that our system must begin with these people.

I am confident that we can achieve this. The manner in which we as a nation have coped with one of the worst droughts of recent times demonstrates our ability to do so. A drought like any other adversity always hits the poorest sections hardest. But, thanks to the success of our past policies of agricultural development, the large buffer stock of foodgrains and the efficient public distribution system, we have been able to mitigate suffering to a great extent. Our Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi visited the drought affected areas and acquainted himself with the problems face to face and arranged for timely assistance to State Governments.

No polity or economy howsoever well developed can be regarded as successful unless the people have shared goals.

and objectives towards national issues. There can be no difference among our people on preserving the unity and integrity of the Nation and no sacrifice can be too great for maintaining its sovereign independence. Within these parameters our Constitution guarantees the protection of religious, educational and cultural freedoms and safeguards the rights of minorities and hill tribes. The secular nature of the nation is fully embedded in a number of Articles of the Constitution. It, therefore, behoves us, the people of India to dedicate ourselves to the ideal of secularism on this auspicious Republic Day.

Whenever external challenges have threatened us, such as in 1962, 1965 and 1971, Indian unity has blazoned. But we should be able to display the same spirit in our journey towards national development which is no less arduous.

Unfortunately, certain forces seek to impede that progress. Violent groups appealing to narrow loyalties and base passions cause repeated setbacks to our march towards progress.

The spurt in communal riots in various parts of the country has caused considerable distress to the people. While the specific origins can be different in each situation, we are now able to trace certain causative patterns. These are, in the main, religious fundamentalism and communalism.

The cult of terrorism continues to vitiate life in certain parts of the country. It indulges in cowardly attacks on the poor and the innocent who have nothing to do with the issues. Inevitably, reactions set in and threaten to perpetuate the vicious circle. We must, however, leave no one with the impression that terrorists can deflect our people from their fundamental values, the values of *ahimsa* and of brotherhood. We must let no one under-estimate the basic adherence of our people to the values of tolerance, non-violence and compassion which have marked Indian civilization for millennia. It is my belief that the pressures and pulls of sub-national loyalties will give way to the far greater loyalty of our people to the Indian Nation.

May I once again quote saint Thiruvalluvar who said
(Translated by the revolutionary freedom fighter VVS
lyer)

"That is the great nation which is not
divided into warring sects
which is free from murderous anarchists
And which has no traitors within its
bosom to ruin it"

Written two thousand years ago, that truth shines as an
eternal warning to the nation

No society exists in isolation India cannot and has not
remained unconcerned about developments around it

The continuing conflict in Sri Lanka led us to offer our
good offices to both parties to the dispute in that country
The historic agreement signed between Prime Minister
Rajiv Gandhi and President J R Jayewardene is indeed a
peaceful and democratic solution to the ethnic problem of
Sri Lanka Unfortunately a section of the Tamils of Northern
Sri Lanka has not co operated in the implementation of the
agreement I do hope that it will soon realise the value of
the Indo Sri Lanka Agreement and help in paving the way
for restoration of peace and harmony in the beautiful island
Statesmanship of a very high order as well as perseverance
will be required to take the agreement to its desired
conclusion and to secure the legitimate rights of the Tamils
of the Eastern and Northern provinces of Sri Lanka The
Indian Peace Keeping Force which has played a commendable
role in the trying circumstances in Sri Lanka deserves both
honour and praise Waging peace is infinitely more difficult
than waging war But it is also infinitely more rewarding

India's desire to see the end of conflicts goes beyond this
part of the world It is a matter of pride for us that our
work against the arms race as exemplified in the Six
Nations Five Continent Initiative for Peace and Disarmament
and in the Delhi Declaration, has led to the building of
world opinion in that direction

The recently concluded agreement between President

Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev on the elimination of land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles has been enthusiastically welcomed by the entire world. It is India's fervent hope that this agreement will be followed by a series of initiatives which will finally usher in an era of disarmament and peace. India will continue to strive for that ideal.

Friends, as we enter the thirty-ninth year of our Republic, let us recall to our minds one image above all others: the image of our National Flag which was presented to the Constituent Assembly by Jawaharlal Nehru and was adopted by it amidst resounding applause. Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, speaking in the Assembly at the time, said of the colours and design on our Flag:

"We are putting in the very centre the white, the white of the Sun's rays. The white means the path of light. . . The orange, the *Bhaguwa* colour, represents the spirit of renunciation. . . All forms of renunciation are to be embodied in *Raja Dharma*. Philosophers must be Kings. Our leaders must be disinterested. They must be dedicated spirits. . . The green is there, our relation to the soil, our relation to the plant life here, on which all other life depends. We must build our Paradise here on this green earth. . . This Flag tells us 'Be ever alert, be ever on the move, go forward, work for a free, flexible, compassionate, decent, democratic society in which Christians, Sikhs, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists will all find a safe shelter'.

Let us all unite under this banner and rededicate ourselves to the ideals which our Flag symbolises.

We Shall Achieve World Renown

ON THE EVE of India's fortieth Republic Day, I extend to all fellow citizens my fraternal greetings and good wishes

Four decades ago, after we had attained Independence under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, our vast and diverse nation was galvanized into a Republic with the *Desharajna* Dr Rajendra Prasad taking office as our first President. The renowned poet Ramdhari Singh Dinkar wrote on that auspicious occasion

सब से विराट् जनतंत्र जगत का आ पहुँचा,
तीस कोटि-हित सिंहासन तैयार करो,
अभिषेक आज राजा का नहीं, प्रजा का है,
तीस कोटि जनता के सिर पर मुकुट धरो।

(The World's biggest Republic is now born?
So set yourself to enthrone
Not one Monarch
But the thirty-three crore people of India,
So set yourself to coronate
Not one Monarch
But the thirty-three crore people of India!)

The formation of the Republic—the *Janatantra* or *Ganatantra* as we call it—brought our diverse people, closer together. It was remarkable that our national consolidation took place without major upheavals or violence—thanks to the vision of our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the decisiveness of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the pragmatism of our national leaders

This process of consolidation and integration has continued apace. The emergence of full-fledged States in the North-

East has helped to bring the people of that region more fully into the mainstream. Constructive dialogues with those who still stood aside in some of these areas, have led to an understanding with them.

A new chapter opened recently in Tripura where some sections realising the futility of violence, joined the mainstream of the national development process. Likewise, the setting up of the Hill Council in Darjeeling and elections thereto, has brought peace to an area which threatened to become explosive.

The peace-loving nature of our people as a whole constitutes a positive sign and encourages us to hope for a workable solution to the torment of Punjab. Continuing terrorist violence in that State anguishes all of us. But it is heartening that in their efforts to combat terrorism, the authorities are receiving full co-operation from the people of the State. It is my belief that the holding of panchayat elections in the State, will help the process of restoration of peace and normalcy in Punjab.

Violence and terrorism have no place in any civilized society much less in India which is the home of *ahimsa*. The perpetration of violent acts, especially on totally innocent victims, therefore, causes the greatest sorrow to us. But wisdom lies: in refusing to let the acts of a few provoke us into any form of rancour or ill will between communities or regions. The people of India have a deep faith in a peaceful, democratic order. This faith of our people must be zealously protected and strengthened.

Nagaland and Mizoram as you all know went to the polls along with Tamil Nadu only last week, re-affirming once again the Nation's deep commitment to the democratic process. No matter who or which political party wins an election, the real winner is the voter.

In a developing society, however, mere representation is not enough; participation and continuing progress are also necessary. Our national ethos which is built up of several

sub national impulses, needs to be absorbed into the Nation's progress towards a better life for its people

Forty years ago, the light of life in the overwhelming part of the country burned dimly Our agriculture functioned at subsistence levels, our industry was minimal But, thanks to our successive Plans and the harnessing of science and technology for economic development, the picture has vastly changed The economy showed remarkable strength and resilience to withstand several adversities, including the recent severe drought of 1987, there has been a remarkable recovery in 1988 Agricultural production is expected to recover fully from the adverse effects of the drought and the year 1988 89 is expected to show a record production of foodgrains and oilseeds This has been rendered possible by the infrastructure developed over the years and policy initiatives of Government, together with the diligence and devotion of the farming community of India

A significant aspect of the economy in recent years has been the rapid growth of industry and its continued diversification In the first half of 1988 89 the industrial sector recorded a growth of over 10 per cent The infrastructure sector has continued to show commendable performance and to provide strong support Several sectors such as coal, power, steel, telecommunications, fertilizers, crude oil, railway freight as well as cargo traffic handled at major ports have exceeded the targets As a result of strong growth in various sectors, the GDP is likely to show an impressive growth rate of 10 per cent in 1988 89 The dedication of our farmers, workers and managers, which has made this possible, deserves to be commended

Two notable features since the founding of the Republic have been the setting up of the process of planning and the major support for science and technology This has resulted in the development of indigenous and self reliant capabilities in key sectors and the creation of a large infrastructure of three million skilled scientific and technical personnel New areas such as biotechnology ocean science,

environment, micro-electronics, informatics, new energy sources and the like have also received high priority. All these are achievements of which the Nation can be proud.

But economic growth and production are only part of the story. Equally important is the distribution of the fruits of production, especially to the poorest sections of our society. This is why our planning strategy has always emphasized that growth must be accompanied by equity and social justice. The removal of poverty must continue to receive our highest priority. Ways and means need to be found to ensure that the benefits of progress percolate to the masses. We rightly derive satisfaction from the fact that the percentage of population below the poverty line has declined. But large numbers of our people still remain below the poverty line. We must, therefore, dedicate ourselves earnestly to the task of eliminating poverty and at the same time reducing disparities.

Government is, of course, giving the highest priority to rural development programmes, the promotion of small industries, schemes for self-employment and to the fostering of the services sector and development of supportive infrastructure. But substantial increases in the per capita availability of cloth, food articles such as edible oils and sugar and infrastructural services such as electricity and transport still remain to be achieved. These services will also need to become increasingly conscious of the requirements of efficiency and quality in delivery.

The problem of poverty will have to be tackled by a process which ensures adequate transfer of resources to rural development and to the amelioration of underprivileged sections like the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the urban dispossessed. Concerted measures need to be undertaken with greater vigour to achieve the Constitutional goal of free and compulsory education for all children under 14. Special thought must be bestowed on educational coverage for girls.

With an annual population increase of 16 million the

problem of unemployment and the misery that accompanies it, continues to bedevil us. Enlargement of the scope for self employment must, therefore, receive high priority in our schemes.

In this context it becomes necessary to conserve our resources and get full value for whatever we spend by increasing productivity. There is need to examine every project from the viewpoint of cost effectiveness and its utility to the largest numbers.

Economy in the handling of our scarce resources should be not just a policy with us but an ethic, not just a desirable aim but a working principle. Everyone has to be conscious of it. The phrase 'economy drive' has been used to the point of tedium in the past. But no patient has suffered from a good prescription being repeated. We have to ensure adequate availability of resources for development, while keeping internal and external debt within prudent limits.

The vocabulary of growth must be held in position by the grammar of financial discipline and the punctuations of a social ideology.

Progress, in order to be real, needs another condition precedent also, namely, that of a peaceful international and regional environment.

A happy development during the last year has been the improvement in the international environment. The emerging detente between the Soviet Union and United States of America following the INF Treaty has not only raised the expectations of further major steps towards disarmament but has contributed to the resolution of regional conflicts. The Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, the halting of the Iran-Iraq War, the agreement aimed at securing the independence of Namibia and the prospects of forward movement on the Kampuchean and the Palestinian issues have been positive developments.

The processes of regional co-operation within the framework of SAARC have continued steadily and people

to people contacts with the region have begun to expand. The decision to draw up a Regional Perspective Plan—‘SAARC 2000’—will help focus attention on problems common to the region. The dialogue with the newly-elected democratic government of Pakistan that has been initiated by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during his visit to Islamabad open up the prospects of an improved relationship between our two countries. India will make all possible efforts to promote speedy normalisation of relations with Pakistan.

There has been continued progress in the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 and several significant developments have taken place recently. A provisional government has been set up in the North-East of Sri Lanka which is working towards normalisation. Legislation has been enacted to give Tamil equal status as an official language and for resolving the problem of statelessness among people of Indian origin. We hope to work closely with the Government of Sri Lanka for further improving our relations.

The Prime Minister's visit to China in December 1988 was an event that marked a new and decisive phase in India-China relations. It has opened up prospects for the normalisation of our relationship with China which will be a major contribution to peace and co-operation in Asia and the world.

It is our hope that a peaceful solution to problems facing Afghanistan would be found through strict observance of the Geneva Accords by all parties.

These developments augur well for strengthening the forces of peace in the world so that its resources may be released for development and prosperity.

May I once again offer Republic Day greetings to our *kisans* and *mazdoors*, to our entrepreneurs, technicians, weavers and artisans, creative artistes, writers, teachers, students and to all sons and daughters of India. I would like to add special greetings and good wishes to our brave

jawans, sailors and airmen who form our valiant defence forces It is their patriotism, bravery and vigil on our frontiers that have guarded our freedom and enabled us to plan and work for future progress

The distinguished Tamil poet, Kavimani Desikavinayakam Pillai wrote

"Not begging for our food
Nor for our clothes
We will establish many
productive enterprises
and drive the ogre of famine
from our midst
and following Gandhi's footsteps
We shall achieve world renown"

As we watch the tricolour go up tomorrow morning, may all of us hold our heads high with pride and confidence in a better and brighter future May I remind the nation of what the Nightingale of India, Smt Sarojini Naidu, speaking in the Constituent Assembly, said

"Remember, under this Flag there is no prince and there is no peasant, there is no rich and there is no poor There is no privilege, there is only duty and responsibility and sacrifice Whether we be Hindus or Muslims, Christians, Jains, Sikhs or Zoroastrians and others, our Mother India has one undivided heart and one indivisible spirit

Men and women of reborn India, rise and salute this Flag! I bid you, rise and salute the Flag"

A Tribute to Indian Democracy

ON THE EVE of the forty-first Republic Day, I offer my greetings to all our nationals living in India and abroad. This is a memorable day for us since it was on this day in 1950 that the different parts of India, namely, the princely States, the erstwhile British Provinces and the Agencies were brought under one Constitution and welded into a Union of States.

The distinguished Hindi poet, Balakrishna Sharma 'Naveen' captured the mood of the Nation when he wrote:

“कोटि कोटि कंठों से निकली
आज यही स्वर धारा है
भारतवर्ष हमारा है
यह हिन्दुस्तान हमारा है”

(From crores upon crores of voices
One single music-note is heard:
This Bharat Varsh is ours now,
Ours, this Hindustan).

It was also on this day that the citizens of India were guaranteed fundamental rights to life and liberty and were freed from exploitation and discrimination. Above all, it was on this day that every citizen of India emerged as the sovereign of the country through the adoption of universal adult franchise.

Adult franchise is the most powerful instrument devised by man for breaking down social and economic injustice and destroying barriers of caste, creed and religion. It has given the right to the people to choose a government through the democratic process of elections.

In my Independence Day broadcast last year I had emphasized the importance of free and fair elections. It is imperative that elections be free from the maladies of coercion, violence and booth capturing. I am happy that the recent elections to the Ninth Lok Sabha has by and large reflected the people's will, though instances of election malpractices and violence were reported from various areas. That nearly 300 million people exercised their franchise and brought about a smooth transition in government especially at a time when, elsewhere, changes of governments have occurred through bitter and violent processes, is the highest tribute to the Indian people and Indian democracy.

The people of India may be poor, many of them may be illiterate, but few societies in the world can match the Indian people in the confidence and maturity with which they exercise their democratic rights. Commentators who used to talk patronisingly of the 'democratic experiment' in relation to India must acknowledge the democratic expertise that India has developed since Independence. May I take this opportunity to congratulate the people of India as a whole on the disciplined exercise of their democratic rights. I also wish to compliment the Election Commission, the Electoral Officers and other administrative staff for their methodical, systematic and fair conduct of the elections. I am confident that in the elections to State Legislatures which lie ahead of us, some of the electoral malpractices noticed during the Lok Sabha elections will be eschewed by political parties and their associates.

In any democracy, the people do want and have every right to change governments according to their wishes, in a peaceful and orderly manner. Monopoly of political power is an attribute of dictatorships. Hence success or failure in elections should not be equated to victory or defeat in a war but, rather, to one's performance in a sports contest. And contestants must remember that it is only by playing the game according to rules that democracy can be sustained. Democracy is the rule of law. It is also the rule of reason. It is, in fact, a rule by consent. Every effort should,

therefore, be made to arrive at a consensus on all national issues.

In a healthy democracy both the ruling party and the opposition have a responsibility to the country and surely the people will judge them in the discharge of that responsibility.

But I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my belief that apart from the responsibilities that devolve on the government and on the opposition, a great responsibility rests with the people themselves. It is wrong to imagine that only governments have the duty to maintain law and order, peace, harmony and progress. The citizen bears an equal responsibility in this regard. Citizenship, it has rightly been said, is a bond. It is a bond between the citizen and the State in which one sustains and is sustained by the other. And that is why our Constitution lays down both fundamental rights and fundamental duties. The late V.S. Srinivasa Sastri had laid down three basic postulates which make an ideal citizen: (i) a sense of public spirit, meaning thereby the desire to sink one's own personal ends in the larger ends of the community; (ii) a practical common sense meaning thereby an ability to cope with and overcome the challenges to individual and collective life that arise from time to time; and (iii) an ability to understand and appreciate what constitutes the welfare of the society, that is, what are the different elements that go to make up that welfare.

The assumption of office by any new government confers on it many new opportunities. But the most important of these is the opportunity to strengthen the bonds between the citizen and the State. The citizen and the State working together can generate a kinetic energy as could transform Indian life.

We are all rightly proud of our manifold achievements in agriculture, in industry, and in the development of our immensely promising infrastructure of science and technology. But our journey cannot be considered complete until we

have achieved an equitable distribution of the fruits of these major achievements. The elimination of poverty among our people and the creation of opportunities for gainful employment, should be placed at the top of the nation's agenda. The promotion of small industries, schemes for self employment, the strengthening of the services sector and of our infrastructure needs to be given renewed impetus. More than anything else, India's startling advances in the field of science and technology need to get integrated with the rhythms of our people's lives.

A palpable transfer of resources to the advantage of rural India is, therefore, required urgently. This transfer will have to be specially aimed at strengthening the underprivileged sections like the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the urban dispossessed and our women.

The welfare of the weaker sections of our society has been entrusted to the nation's collective care by the founding fathers of our polity. Their advancement must, therefore, be regarded by the Nation as its privilege.

The quality of life of the people living below the poverty line is a matter of the most urgent concern. The lack of employment opportunities among them, the low levels of medicare including protected water supply and elementary education cry out for action.

Through steps such as free and compulsory education for all children under 14 and educational coverage for girls, the great disparities in our society can be removed. The General Assembly of the United Nations has proclaimed the year 1990 as the International Literacy Year. We must utilize this opportunity to initiate a series of nationwide activities aimed at imparting a sense of urgency to the problem of illiteracy. I understand that measures have been initiated at various levels and that plans for a complete eradication of illiteracy have been approved for Kerala, Goa and Pondicherry. These have to be extended to major cities, districts and development blocks.

I should like to take this opportunity to share with you two

other deep concerns. The first is about the scourge of inflation which impoverishes the weaker sections continuously and undermines the nation surreptitiously. There is a need for drastically pruning public expenditure and ostentatious private spending. Investments that do not provide commensurate returns have to be ruthlessly cut out and all unnecessary and wasteful expenditure completely eliminated. In the last two decades, the savings of the middle and lower middle classes have been greatly eroded and they have been robbed of the fruits of their labour. This section of the population is inarticulate and suffers in silence but it also constitutes the most explosive element in society.

Secondly, we as a developing nation will be unrealistic if we do not pay adequate attention to the continuing increase in our population. The problem of unemployment and the misery that accompanies it are a direct result of runaway population growth. The Government at the Centre and in the States must, with the co-operation of voluntary agencies, make family limitation a peoples' programme. Only then can the rise in population be contained. If this important problem does not receive the attention it needs from the citizens and the States, all the progress achieved by us at great expense and effort will get nullified.

Perhaps the most important of the fundamental duties enshrined in our Constitution is the one that enjoins us to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India, transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities.

Our saints, from Kabir to Guru Nanak and the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, have spoken of harmony among our different communities as a wise and natural way of life for our people.

The people of India seek peace. They long for an environment in which their tradition of concord can continue uninterrupted. The acts of terrorism which have disfigured life in parts of India are repugnant to our culture and civilization. In recent times, the barbaric practice of taking

hostages has also been witnessed by us with dismay Terrorists who perpetrate such crimes do not represent the people nor the causes which they presume to represent Terrorists act only for themselves and for their narrow mercenary ends They only help breed tensions, suspicion and hatred

I am deeply distressed by the fact that in some parts of the country terrorists have received encouragement and assistance from beyond the national borders

I would like to take this opportunity to make a specific appeal to our fellow citizens in the State of Jammu and Kashmir to give no quarter to terrorism and violence The people of Jammu and Kashmir and of Punjab will, I am confident, render to the Government and the administration their unstinted co operation in the task of maintaining order and national security

There are no aspirations which cannot be met, no anxieties which cannot be allayed, no hurts which cannot be healed, by dialogue Differences there may be amongst fellow Indians but suspicion is out of place Likewise, grievances there may be, but let us not permit recrimination Let divergences not deepen into antagonisms An honest desire to understand other's feelings can unlock closed hearts and thaw frozen minds Let amity and understanding prevail over anger and animosity

India is a mosaic of cultures It is in our nature and instinct to seek to live in peace with our neighbours and strive for a non-violent world order We have no aggressive intentions against any country in the world Power has not attracted us, principles have The policy of non alignment evolved by the architect of modern India, and world statesman Jawaharlal Nehru, has enabled us to carry forward our struggle against imperialism and colonialism

We seek the ending of racial discrimination and all forms of domination and exploitation Revitalizing and strengthening ties with our neighbours in South Asia are also a matter of priority for us We firmly believe in resolving bilateral and

international issues by dialogue and discussion.

It is India's hope that with the brightening prospects of improved East-West relations, the world will give up the expensive arms race and turn its resources and energies to the urgent needs of the 'family of man'.

An anniversary such as Republic Day affords me an opportunity to share some of my deepest thoughts with fellow countrymen. I have done so once again with the hope and confidence that as we enter the fifth decade of our life as a Republic, the benediction of all the saints and statesmen born in our ancient land will abide with us.

May I offer Republic Day greetings to all the sons and daughters of India, to our painstaking *kisans* and *mazdoors*, to our spinners, weavers and village artisans, to our entrepreneurs and technocrats, to our scientists, administrators, creative artistes, writers, teachers and students. I have great pleasure in extending a special word of greetings to our valiant *jawans*, sailors and airmen who maintain an unremitting vigil on our borders. It is their patriotism and bravery that guards our freedom and ensures our rapid economic development.

I will conclude with a quotation from the distinguished Tamil scholar and yogi, Suddhananda Bharathi.

*"Pirivina! Sai Peedai Intry,
Paei Maha Verikalintry
Urimaiyonki Ullamonki
Unmaiyonki Vanmaiyonki
Bharata Jana Nayakam Vazgavei."*

The lines mean :
May the curse of separatism
And religious frenzy abate;
May our thoughts be lofty,
Our morale high
And may Truth
Prevail everlastingly.
Long live the peoples' Republic of Bharat.

Towards a Millennium of Peace

TOMORROW, WE WILL be celebrating our forty-second Republic Day. On this auspicious occasion, I extend my cordial felicitations to all fellow citizens, living in India and abroad.

This is a deeply cherished anniversary. The nation gratefully remembers today, the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, our first President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, our beloved first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru and the indomitable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who, as Deputy Prime Minister welded the hundreds of different princely States together with the rest of India. It was on this day in 1950, that the whole of India came under *Ek Nishan, Ek Vidhan* (One Flag, One Constitution). A wave of optimism swept across the country and its diverse people found themselves linked together in a new and creative partnership. The celebrated Hindi poet, Sumitranandan Pant gave expression to the popular enthusiasm in these words:

"आओ जन स्वतंत्र भारत को
जीवन उर्वर भूमि बनाए।"

(Come O people of free Bharat!
Let us make our land
Yield life-giving energy)

The common man was made the sovereign of the country and adult franchise, the most vital instrument fashioned by man for establishing political, social and economic equality, came to be formally placed in the hands of our people. They acquired the power to choose a government for themselves, through endorsement of the election manifesto.

to their choice. Sceptics, both at home and abroad had grave doubts about our people's capacity to exercise their franchise properly as, it was felt, they had neither education nor political awareness. But the very first general elections where a 180 million people went to the polls and conducted the most orderly elections, proved the foresight and wisdom of our leaders.

Few countries can boast of a parliamentary system that has our scale and sweep. The world has watched with admiration and even surprise how a nation with the complexity, diversity and socio-economic problems of India had gone through a series of elections with regularity, discipline and maturity. The practised skill of the Indian voter in the exercise of his franchise is now acknowledged everywhere as one of free India's great triumphs.

Thanks to the firm commitment of our leaders to democracy and the growing maturity of our electorate, India has witnessed and participated in nine elections to the Lok Sabha and several elections to State Legislatures. In all these, the people's will has found powerful articulation.

In election after election, our voters have exercised their franchise with supreme *elan*. We have seen governments receiving decisive mandates and have seen those very mandates being withdrawn equally decisively. But, irrespective of which party has won or lost an election, the people of India have been victorious at every election. No more can commentators use the patronizing expression 'democratic experiment' in relation to the people of India. Theirs is no longer an experiment with democracy. Theirs is an exercise in political maturity.

This achievement of ours is, however, no political accident. Its roots lie in our own vast, pluralist civilization. Different systems of belief as also different social, linguistic and cultural denominations have co-existed for centuries in our land as a natural way of life of our people. Our democratic polity is a modern political dimension of this ancient eclectic temper of our population.

An occasion such as our Republic Day affords an opportunity to us to introspect and examine the state of our democracy's health. Today, four decades and more after our Constitution was adopted, we will have to admit that the democratic temper in our country is under stress. Respect for other points of view, patience, forbearance and accommodation which are the very hallmarks of democracy are at a discount. Rancour, recrimination and a readiness to give and take offence are edging out the spirit of friendliness, courtesy and mutual regard for each other. Some of the utterances of rival political parties, give the impression that they are no longer competitors in the endeavour to serve the nation but are bitter enemies drawn in battle array. Even the most contentious cases in courts of law do not leave bitterness behind among the counsel representing the litigants. The same spirit prevails in the Legislatures of mature democracies where heated debates in the House do not engender bitterness among the Legislators. I am of the view that the first corrective we have to apply to our conduct in Legislatures is to restore cordiality, friendliness and mutual respect among political parties. *Audi olteram partem* 'hear the other side' is the elementary principle of natural justice. Legislatures more than any other institution should respect this principle because members have received a mandate from the people to put forward, within well defined limits their views before the nation. Any attempt to deny this right by whatsoever method, is an affront to the nation. Besides, the nation is entitled to know the pros and cons of an issue and to deprive it of information by intolerance of the other point of view is the negation of democracy. I would like to make a fervent appeal to the Legislatures to practise the art of healthy debate on national issues and problems. In particular, greater attention needs to be paid to the legislative business before the House.

Parliamentary democracy in India has been going through a process of change. For a little over one year now the phenomenon of one party enjoying a comfortable majority at the Centre has been replaced by a different configuration. An outmoded political vocabulary describes the post 1989

Lok Sabha as a 'hung Parliament'. Brought up in the purely Westminster model, some political analysts have been dismayed by the fact, that instead of the conventional bipolarity with some "fringe" parties at the outer periphery, we now have in our Parliament a many-hued spectrum. There is, in my view, no need for dismay on this score. Numerous examples can be cited of minority or coalition governments working with stability and success in different parts of the globe. We in India may have to adapt ourselves to such a situation if it arises and learn to work together in the common cause, shedding in the process, rigid party positions. In a multiparty political system, we may not be able to avoid coalition governments in the interest of the nation. Yet, there is a great deal of mental resistance to this concept, springing from the past familiarity with a two-party system. It is time serious thought is directed towards the evolving patterns of our polity.

It is equally important for us to remember that in a democracy, a simultaneous responsibility rests with us, the people. Citizenship is a bond between the people and the State. It is for this reason that our Constitution provides for both fundamental rights and fundamental duties. Unfortunately, the air today is thick with the claims and counter-claims of rights. Different strata of our society seem to be worked up about what they perceive as wrongs done to them, all the while forgetting that they themselves may be in the wrong.

Slogans, not conversation have become the normal mode of dialogue; agitation, not discussion, mark the relationship between different groups. We must not forget that Gandhiji resorted to *satyagraha* only as a last resort after all other means had failed. And even when he did so, he was prepared to suspend or give it up at the first sign of accommodation. And let us not forget that with him *satya* came before *agraha*. We now seem to have more of *agraha* than its noble prefix. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all fellowmen to look upon citizenship as a partnership which confers benefits only if each citizen

contributes his share to the common good of society

The responsibility of protecting and preserving democracy lies with the citizens. In the ultimate analysis it is they who determine, who should administer the country and how. If they are swayed away from this path of duty by violence, corruption or frenzy, they will be striking at the very root of democracy. It is the duty of the Government, political parties and the people, to ensure that the true will of the people is reflected in the Legislatures by free and fair elections.

Our nation faces acute problems of poverty and backwardness. One third of the population of India still lives at the subsistence level. The disparity between the rich and the poor, city and village, graduate and illiterate, remains wide. Our women continue to suffer great indignities. The child in India's disadvantaged half, and the female child in particular, scarcely knows the joy of childhood.

Our progress has been stupendous—in agriculture, industry and in science and technology. But the vast masses of our people have remained outside the pale of this progress. Our self-sufficiency in food has been a matter of immense satisfaction, especially because this has enabled us to share our farm-produce with other nations in their hour of need. But, for a third of our rural population, the lack of purchasing power has robbed our food self-sufficiency of any meaning. The thrust for rural employment given by successive governments should now develop an edge to penetrate deeper into the recesses of rural society.

A transfer of resources to the advantage of rural India is an urgent necessity. This transfer will have to aim particularly at strengthening underprivileged sections like the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and our women. The lack of employment opportunities among our weaker sections, the low levels of medicare including protected water supply and elementary education also call for swift action.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you

my deep concern regarding the state of our nation's financial health. The scourge of inflation has made life for the middle class and the weaker sections a daily travail. The Government's resources have been inelastic, while its expenditure has been galloping. To add to the difficulty, the oil crisis has worsened the situation. All these have caused acute financial stringency. The inadequate resources should not, however, slow down development programmes nor should our national safety and security be denied. Under the circumstances the need for eliminating all avoidable public expenditure becomes paramount. The Government must critically examine every item of expenditure and effect the utmost economy.

In addition, our expenditure on oil import will create a crushing burden on the entire nation. Shortages of essential commodities like diesel and kerosene will effect rural life adversely. The need for mobilizing additional resources is, therefore, unavoidable. I feel that raising additional resources through the Budget should be supplemented by voluntary contributions from patriotic citizens to help the nation tide over the present crisis. There can be no greater philanthropy than lending a hand of succour to the nation at its hour of crisis. The Government may, therefore, constitute a National Reconstruction Fund and accept voluntary contributions for the purpose of sustaining developmental activities. I would make an earnest appeal to all our countrymen within and outside the country to make substantial contributions to the fund so that our pace of progress may be maintained even during the severe financial crunch.

I know this is not easy in a situation where salaries are more or less static and the cost of living is rising. But I am sure the spirit of sacrifice which has always manifested itself in times of need, will not be found wanting amidst us at this critical juncture. Let us remind ourselves of the fact that during the wars forced on us in 1962, 1965 and 1971 the people of India rose most decisively to the occasion and made handsome voluntary contributions. I am sure in

the present war on our economic ills, they will make the same response.

The overall law and order situation in some parts of the country has continued to cause us anxiety. The activities of terrorists in the States of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab cause us continuing anguish. Innocent men, women and children are being menaced by terrorists almost daily in Punjab. Many, in the course of official duty, have been picked out and assassinated. They have become martyrs in the cause of India's unity. But their families, have suffered irreparable loss, and immeasurable grief. Though nothing by way of compensation can make up for the void created in their lives, it is the duty of the Government to extend all assistance to the victims of terrorism on a priority basis.

But, despite all provocations, the people of India must maintain peace. Provocation, retaliation, or revenge is not the answer to the problem. The path of violence has never achieved tranquillity in any age or clime. The personifications of love and compassion such as the Buddha, Mahavira, Adi Sankara, Kabir and Nanak are our common legacy.

Religious hatred is no part of the Indian psyche. The violence that has erupted in different parts of India in recent months, must, therefore, be firmly contained by the Government and rejected by society, as an aberration from our tradition.

I am happy to note that foreign policy, in particular, has remained an area of broad national consensus. Changes in the government do not alter our relations with other countries, nor our perception of international affairs. A profound transformation of international relations has been under way. The threat of a global conflict between the superpowers has receded. India's foreign policy is creatively responding to these developments. We have been in continuous dialogue with major countries of the world to maintain and strengthen relations with them, while devoting special attention to our neighbours.

The outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf has caused us deep

anguish. It is tragic that war could not be prevented despite efforts from many quarters, including India. There is no doubt that the war will cause widespread devastation and human suffering. Moreover, the positive gains made in international relations as a result of the ending of the cold war might be lost. There is a tradition of excellent relation between India and the countries of the Gulf. We have been assiduously trying to strengthen these relations. The war may undermine our efforts in this direction. The international community owes itself and the world the duty to defuse the situation and restore peace.

The developing world to which we belong, above all, needs peace, because it is engaged in a historic task—the task of rectifying the imbalances created by colonialism; the task of clearing the debris of departing empires. It is, therefore, necessary to work towards a world order that is democratic and truly multilateral and based upon equity and justice.

I have great pleasure in offering Republic Day greetings to all the sons and daughters of India, to those valiant freedom fighters who happily are still with us, to our *kisans* and *mazdoors*, to our spinners, weavers and village artisans, to our scientists, entrepreneurs and technocrats, to our administrators, creative artistes, teachers and students. I take special pleasure in extending our greetings to our Defence Forces whose unremitting vigil on our borders upholds our sovereignty and ensures our economic development.

The flag which will go up tomorrow is the emblem of the nation. Let us all stand united as one man under this banner. May this flag shower benediction on all of us and lead us forward towards a millennium of peace and prosperity.

Together We Build a New India

ON THE EVE of our forty third Republic Day, I have great pleasure in conveying to all fellow citizens, living in India and abroad, my cordial felicitations and greetings

This is a cherished anniversary for us. It was on this day in 1950 that our country was welded into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and the people acquired fundamental rights to liberty, equality and fraternity. We remember today the sagacious Dr Rajendra Prasad, our first President of the Republic, our beloved first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru—the architect of modern India—and the indomitable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who brought the diverse princely authorities under the unified control of the new Republic. The national tricolour, which had inspired us during the struggle for freedom, went up on that historic day with a flutter of confidence and expectation. Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in an address to the Constituent Assembly on the day the Flag was officially adopted said

“The Flag tells us: Be ever alert, be ever on the move, go forward, work for a free, flexible, compassionate, decent, democratic society in which Christians, Sikhs, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists will all find a safe shelter”

Every word of that passage from our philosopher-statesman is vital for the Republic: flexibility, compassion, decency, tolerance of other views and restraint in the expression of one's own, patience in the face of provocation, empathy for fellow human beings in distress. These are the hallmarks of civilized behaviour. Democracy cannot be sustained except on the solid foundation of civilized behaviour.

The framers of the Constitution knew that if our freedom and our democracy were to ring true, our society must

exhibit a readiness to tolerate and assimilate diversities of outlook.

Adult franchise and universal suffrage also ensured that the diverse facets of national opinion would articulate themselves at the hustings, with ease and effectiveness. The institution of parliamentary democracy with several parties presenting their programmes of action through election manifestos afforded citizens a freedom in the choice of party and government. The kaleidoscope of public opinion has been turned ten times by us in a many general elections. Parties have been returned to power overwhelmingly, rejected equally decisively. With each election, the nation has matured and marched forward in the path of democracy.

Long before the Constitution was framed Mahatma Gandhi, addressing the Second Round Table Conference, said:

"I shall work for an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class or low class of people; and an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women shall enjoy the same rights as men. . ."

Various Articles of the Constitution have declared discrimination by the State as between citizen and citizen on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, illegal. By throwing open all public places to all citizens, by abolishing untouchability, by offering equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment and by guaranteeing equality before the law and equal protection of the laws, it has secured for all of us the principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity as envisaged in the Preamble to the Constitution.

Furthermore, the system of parliamentary democracy has ensured that the State shall be accountable to the people for every one of its actions. Through interpellations, motions

and debates, the executive is called upon to convince the people that their measures subserve national interests and the welfare of the people. Unless the institution of Parliament is appropriately utilized, it will not fulfil the role for which it has been created.

If Mother India has been served well by the institutions of parliamentary democracy, it has also been benefited by the instrument of planned economic development.

Over the last four decades and more, our farmers who constituted 70 per cent of the electorate have also demonstrated amazing skill in adopting new farm practices. As a result, our granaries are full. Our industrial infrastructure has, simultaneously, acquired sinews strong enough to place us in the frontline among manufacturers of basic industrial goods. Indian industry has shown an extraordinary capacity to produce goods of great variety and sophistication. We have achieved modest success in not only meeting the internal demand but external markets as well.

India's journey along the road of scientific and technological advance proceeds apace, with marked achievements in the realms of telecommunications, biotechnology, oceanography and space research. Our programme for the peaceful uses of atomic energy continues to give us satisfying results.

Our impressive gains in GDP would normally have given us a much higher standard of life had it not been neutralized by the stupendous growth in our population. It is becoming increasingly difficult to provide our present and *ever expanding population with a reasonable standard of living*. Recent initiatives taken to spread literacy among our adult population, especially our women, have come not a day too soon. But much more needs to be done in this direction. It is time a strategy was devised to reach India's rural women, with a simple and efficacious programme in order to save them the burden of an unmanageable family.

If our efforts at economic development and poverty alleviation have had to reckon with the rock of over

population; our efforts at creating a national ethos meet with challenges of a deeper kind. I refer to the impediments being placed on our path by three negative forces which are unremittingly at work. These are the cult of terrorism; the virus of communal hatred and an invisible but most corrosive phenomenon; a pervasive slackening in national discipline.

Bullets and bombs have no place in a democracy where avenues for constitutional redressal exist. And yet, public servants on duty, political figures, journalists, and innocent men, women and children have been—and are being—killed and taken hostage in many parts of the country on almost a daily basis. Punjab, the valley of Kashmir, Assam, several parts of the North-East and certain areas in South and Central India have been witness to cold, calculated and bizarre acts of terrorism. Our security forces and our Army, wherever deployed, have shown tremendous grit and patience. I would like to take this opportunity to compliment them on their courage and valour.

But it is necessary now to go beyond weeding out terrorism's toxic plants. We must ensure that the causes and conditions which breed terrorism are eliminated. This would call for a more vigorous implementation of land reforms, of wastelands development, of reduction of disparities and provision of adequate employment opportunities for our youth.

We must not assume that the cash nexus is sufficient to fulfil human aspirations. Cultural and regional identities need to be assured and reassured that they are safe in a democratic polity such as ours. We must simultaneously offer the constitutional and democratic path for the ventilation of grievances and for the realization of local aspirations.

The new Government's initiatives to bring a healing touch to some of the nation's deep pains are, therefore, a matter of great satisfaction. Consultation, conciliation and concord are time-tested remedies.

It is matter of shame and sorrow that we have not been

able to prevent communal and caste violence in different parts of the country Innocent religious processions or festivals end up in a violent eruption Very often, the cause for the clash is absurdly trivial and yet it leaves a trail of death and destruction in which, more often than not, women and children are the most unfortunate sufferers All restraint, all civility, seems to evaporate when frenzy overtakes even sensible men Such instances of violence are a blot on our cultural heritage and our national image as a non violent and peaceful people

This brings me to the third negative factor I mentioned, namely, increasing indiscipline and the palpable erosion of faith in the rule of law Individuals, political organizations, professional groups, trade unions take all too quickly to the path of agitation and obstruction The result is a breakdown in public order One of the most distinguished framers of our Constitution, Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar said as long back as 1947

“The recent happenings in different parts of the country have convinced me more than ever, that all the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution must be subject to public order, security and safety ”

The exercise of one's rights is always subject to non-infringement of the rights of others There is a story, that an Englishman walked along swinging his walking stick and it struck the nose of another person When the injured person objected, the wielder of the stick said that England had ensured freedom to all people and that in swinging his stick he was only exercising his right The objector then replied “Sir, your freedom ends where my nose begins”

It is truism that while in a dictatorship, laws are enforced, in a democracy, laws are voluntarily observed The rule of law in a democracy must be maintained by inner restraints, by self discipline But maintained, it must be Without discipline, democracy loses its meaning Gandhiji had once said that *Swaraj* means two things—self-rule and self-restraint We in India have the former, namely, self-

rule. We also have, in a large measure, self-reliance as well. But of self-restraint we seem to be in short supply.

The history of civilization is the history of human endeavour to replace a chaotic society by an orderly one where people live in peace and harmony, avoid conflicts and settle differences by discussions or by judicial processes. Early man settled differences by force but the civilized man resorted to peaceful measures for resolving differences. Unless the country accepts this basic principle, there can be no peace, harmony or progress. Principles of natural justice do provide for correction of errors of the machinery for settlement of differences and should be resorted to in case of need. The tendency to take unwelcome conclusions to the streets spells disaster to the future of the nation.

The nation is undergoing acute economic and financial crisis and it is the duty of every citizen to contribute his mite for the recovery and rehabilitation of the economy. There is urgent need to maximize production and ensure its equitable distribution so that the weaker sections are not left to fend for themselves. Nothing that militates against fullest utilization of all existing capacities in agriculture, industry, trade, commerce, communications and banking should be tolerated or encouraged. If we are to emerge from the crisis, a moratorium should be declared voluntarily at the national level for at least two years on all *bandhs*, strikes and lock-outs or any other activity such as 'go-slow' and 'work-to-rule' which impedes economic development. This is a duty which we owe to our own children and progeny.

Friends, the bipolar division of the world is now virtually a thing of the past; the cold war has ended. International relations are moving towards a redefinition, with old juxtapositions becoming obsolete. India's role in a world that is no longer bipolar will continue to be important. We cannot assume that the new emerging world order will be free of strains. Conflagrations can occur even in the changed scenario and the exploitation of weak nations can acquire new forms. The principles underlying our policy of non-

alignment and *Panchsheel* will, therefore, continue to be relevant to the world

The recent visits to India by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and China gave us an opportunity to continue our dialogue with these two ancient neighbours. It is our hope that a solution to the differences between India and China will be found soon. It is equally our desire to normalize relations with Pakistan. But the active encouragement and assistance rendered to militants in Punjab and in Kashmir from across the border, stands in the way of normalization. India wants and will work for peace, but India will not compromise on its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

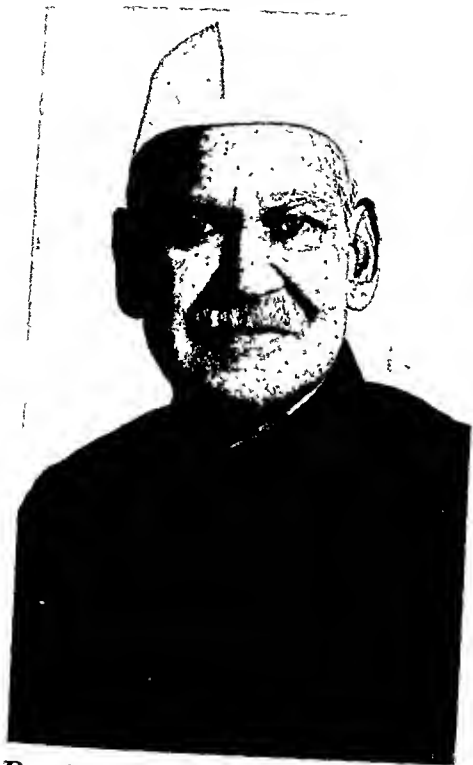
I have great pleasure in, once again, offering Republic Day greetings to the sons and daughters of India, to our *kisans* and *mazdoors*, to our village artisans, to our entrepreneurs, scientists and technologists, to our administrators, creative artistes, professionals teachers and students. It gives me special pleasure, as Supreme Commander, to extend my greetings to all our Defence Forces and commend their valour in guarding our borders under extreme conditions.

More than 2000 years ago, the Tamil saint, Thiruvalluvar said

*"Pal Kuluvum Paar Seyyum Utpagayum Veendalaikkum
Kolkurumbum Illada Nadu"*

(That is a great nation which is not divided into warring sects, which is free from murderous anarchists and which has no traitors within its bosom to ruin it)

Let us build that India, through discipline in thought, word and deed, through unity among all classes of people and through selfless service to the nation.



Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma

(25.07.1992 to 25.07.1997)

Stamp Out Communalism

TOMORROW OUR NATION celebrates Republic Day On this auspicious occasion, I have great pleasure in extending to you and to Indians beyond our shores, my greetings and good wishes

Forty three years ago, on the 26th of January 1950, the Constitution of India came into force—representing the values, goals and solemn resolve of the people of India—mindful of history, and conscious of the challenges and the vistas ahead

That ethos which sustained India over thousands of years immanent, invincible and strength giving—finds expression in our Constitution and lights the path towards the well being, dignity and happiness of all

The ideals, philosophy and vision, innate to our Constitution, integrate us as one Nation and make our dreams for a better future attainable

By firm adherence to the composite thought in our Constitution, notwithstanding a wide range of obstacles, we have made decisive progress in many spheres of national reconstruction Innumerable successes, big and small, have been gained by patriotic effort vitalized by the practical idealism in our Constitution

Conversely, almost all our problems have resulted from inadequacies or failures in availing of the wisdom of our Constitutional thought

Fellow citizens, ponder carefully over what I say, for today, having come thus far since Independence, India stands at the crossroads of history, and our destiny will be as we shape it to be

Two prospects have emerged before us On the one hand

is the path of understanding, peace, mutual accommodation, friendship, co-operation and common endeavour—each strengthening the other. This will confer to every community, region and individual, in our vast and populous nation, a position of dignity, prosperity and happiness. Progressively we would surmount every ill and problem besetting us—be it poverty, prejudice, insecurity, ignorance or disease. Dynamically, our nation can develop and transform itself and ascend from strength to strength and be a force for the good of all humanity. This vision is within our reach. We have the talents, the resources and the chance to secure it. Our ancient land has been thus before. Our Constitution is a beacon to this very destination.

The other prospect, is of endless strife, suffering, agony and misery : wrought by narrow thinking, word or deed. Need anyone explain this? How much more should we be witness to before we decide to abjure communalism, and unmask and shun the purveyors of that poisonous creed?

Communalism poses a devastating threat to every individual, to every sector : social, economic and political; indeed, to our entire nation. Those misguided few who spread communal prejudice and engage in or incite communal violence have to be recognized as ushering ruination for all—including themselves. Subscribing to communal outlook in India is a supreme folly. But some persist in it and some others fall prey to it.

Communalism begets communalism. Ultimately, none gain; all lose, when communal thinking holds sway over us.

The recent recrudescence of rioting and violence is telling proof, if any further proof were required, of the inevitable tragic consequences of communalism. My heart goes out to the innocents, the women and the children victimized. Who can recompense the loss of life or of dignity, or of an atmosphere of kinship and oneness marred by fear and suspicions? The masses, the poor, and the weak suffer the most. They are the first to be struck and the last to

recover Who can adequately reimburse their losses in wages, livelihood and shelter?

It is essential for all to comprehend the criticality of this issue in other crucial respects also So long as the problem of communalism vexes us, our capability as a nation is curtailed in key tasks of building a self-reliant, competitive economy, creating gainful employment, enhancing per capita income levels and developing the aggregate wherewithal of a Welfare State The total focus of national attention is diverted Our national security is rendered vulnerable to the machinations of elements from outside

As the Constitutional Head of our Republic, I shall endeavour to do all I may to safeguard the national interest and the well-being of all in our composite, pluralistic culture and polity

Friends, India has been the home of all the great religions, and the simple truth is that there is a oneness of inner doctrine and ethical teaching, in all religions We, Indians, must need appreciate this Religion is, therefore, as far apart from communalism as the sacred is from the profane, or good is from evil

As one people, one nation, one Republic, we must set ourselves against communalism, and stamp out every vestige of it We must be resolute and unflinching in this Only then shall we be able to save and serve our diverse modes of devotion, true to our faith and our Motherland

We shall prove ourselves in the period ahead Dutifully, as the mother tends her child, the farmer his field, the worker his machine, the soldier his weapon, so should every organ and entity in our system of parliamentary democracy strive zealously and meticulously to fulfil the designated role in the various inter-linked areas of national reconstruction The Legislature, Executive and Judiciary have an increasingly important role to play—as does the press with full scope for performance of rightful duties Veterans of our struggle for freedom, the Civil Services,

Armed Forces, our scientists, engineers and teachers, doctors, writers, poets and artistes, our social and voluntary activists, and specially, the women of India, comprise a tremendous wealth of talent, energy and dedication. It is essential that all participate with determination to uphold the Rule of Law, to safeguard and enlarge the gains of freedom and to give to the children of India an environment of harmony, unity, productive endeavour and happiness. Let us in the spirit of national solidarity strive together to fulfil the creative agenda for a new India—an India at peace with herself, true to her time-tested ethical and moral values, manifesting her unique genius in a myriad ways, an India the world can look up to.

Friends, on behalf of all of you, I would like to express our faith in the resilience of the ethos of India, our nation's inner strength and determination to overcome every challenge and fully secure our clearly defined national goals.

The eyes of the world look upon us. The message of India to our neighbourhood and to the rest of the world has been and will be of peace, friendship and co-operation. We shall continue to play a vigilant and creative role in world affairs for the good of all humankind.

Tomorrow, on our forty-fourth Republic Day, when we unfurl the national tricolour, let us salute our flag of freedom, reiterate our national resolve, and re-dedicate ourselves to our Motherland.

Brothers and sisters, may reason guide us, and may every citizen to be a light unto himself and a friend to his neighbour. So may India be glorious.

Achieve Positive Dynamic Transformation

TOMORROW OUR NATION celebrates Republic Day On this auspicious occasion, I have great pleasure in extending to you my warmest greetings and felicitations

Our Republic Day is a day of national resolve, a time to contemplate our position as a nation in relation to the world around us, and to introspect upon our duties as individual citizens in enhancing and safeguarding the gains of freedom

As we enter the forty-fifth year of our Republic, each of us must realize, and act upon the realization, that increasingly, the world of today will test our every sinew and faculty, virtue and ideal, every system and sector More than ever before, common sense and plain understanding of present realities enjoin that we must organize ourselves to stand on our own resources human, institutional, material and spiritual Indeed, we shall have to strive ever harder, unitedly and with self reliance, to go from strength to strength howsoever difficult the task may be

For three centuries past, the history of the world has been determined by the relations between a few nations even though they were involved, in varying groups and in different periods, in confrontation and war with one another The waging of a valiant and principled struggle for equity and human dignity, as in our country and other parts of the world, was a crucially important trend in this context

In the present times and in the future, the main features of the world's political economy will be moulded by those nations which lead in science, technology and industrialization, and occupy the commanding heights in global trade and commerce

Today the world is at relative peace. Threat of confrontation having been dramatically lessened, and, instead, scope for friendship and mutual collaboration having been enlarged, the leading nations are well-poised to co-operate in fashioning the emerging world order.

Powerful and far-reaching initiatives in this direction are underway. A new global balance is being adjusted as between the continents of America, Europe, Africa and Asia. A framework of guarded globalization, including elaborate regulatory parameters, is under settlement. New regional and zonal groupings are also assuming shape. Prestigious international organizations are facilitating peaceful establishment of the new environment for nations and peoples around the globe.

Friends, these developments impinge upon the lives of each of us as individuals and as citizens of one nation. Together we must respond to the challenge and prove our mettle.

Let us fully appreciate that within us we have the where-withal to achieve positive dynamic transformation. Our nation has a tremendous wealth of talented and dedicated men and women comparable with and even superior to the best in the world. Our being wedded to democracy, and having absorbed and gained fuller sensitivity to the concepts, processes and needs of democratic governance, is an advantage of profound importance. We have built, gained experience in, and developed the institutional infrastructure and mechanisms of parliamentary democracy at the federal, state, district, taluka and village levels. We must impart greater qualitative and quantitative impetus to true democratic decentralization and augment political democracy with economic democracy. This would create the channels and scope for releasing and galvanizing the creativity and manifold genius of our vast human resources.

Prudently husbanded, our remarkable range of biodiversity, and mineral wealth, human talent, institutional structures, and strategic location on the globe, can spell

rapid self sustaining growth and development At the heart of this endeavour we must uphold, clearly and fully, our great national values The dignity of every human being, individual freedom, rights and duties, equality and social justice, service and selflessness, and resolute commitment to materialize these, must inform our tasks

Let us heed the voice of our sages and saints and learn the lessons from our own history Pluralism, oneness and equality are intrinsic elements of our heritage and comprise a source of national strength of enormous importance For centuries we have absorbed and reflected upon the truth of the oneness of the inner doctrine and purpose of all religions Let there now be full manifestation of this realization, in our day to day actions in the social, political and economic areas of national life

Friends, we Indians have to comprehend that the world is fast entering a new chapter in its history, in which the modern imperatives of patriotic duty have to be analysed, grasped and fulfilled by each citizen in his or her sphere of existence and service

The *Kisan*, the *Jawan* and the *Mazdoor*, our artisans and entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers, teachers and doctors, writers, poets and artists, representatives of the people, the judiciary, the civil service and the Armed Forces, and specially the women of India—all of us must ponder over and perform with utmost devotion, our respective individual and collective duty

The Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, had said "I want India to realize that she has a soul that can rise triumphant above every physical combination of a whole world "

Our victory will be on the strength of our dedication to truth, non violence, and unflinching constructive effort arousing the conscience of the world and the moral and ethical force of democracy in nations and peoples of the East and of the West

India seeks peace, friendship and co-operation with all nations and peoples, specially our neighbours in the sub-continent and other countries in Asia with whom we have ties of kinship and culture.

We are committed to the well-being of all humanity and performing a creative role in world affairs.

Equally we shall zealously guard our freedom, national sovereignty and integrity. The Government and the people of India shall brook no interference in this respect.

Friends, let us strive to fulfil the dreams of those who gave their all for India's freedom, and render service such that for generations hence our Nation may regard us too as having done our duty well.

Tomorrow, on our Republic Day, when we unfurl the national tricolour, let us salute our flag of freedom and pledge ourselves to the glory of India and the good of all humankind.

Pluralism Must For National Unity

TOMORROW, WE CELEBRATE our forty-sixth Republic Day. On this auspicious anniversary, I extend my greetings to all of you and to our countrymen beyond our shores.

January 26 is a momentous date in our history. It was on this day that our Constitution, framed by the representatives of free India, came into effect. This Constitution enumerated our rights and responsibilities while reflecting our dreams and aspirations. Its provisions have had a vital bearing on the development of our polity

during the last 45 years Republic Day is an occasion for us all to think about the state of our Union, to assess our achievements, and consider the challenges which we collectively face

Our Constituent Assembly, in envisioning the India of the future, drew upon values which sustained our civilization from the very dawn of history Democracy, secularism and social justice represent the core of these values The Preamble of our Constitution declares our commitment to secure for all citizens justice, liberty and equality It affirms our belief in the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation These are not merely noble sentiments, but practical concepts which constitute the basis of modern Independent India

Rights of human beings have a central place in our endeavour to build a polity sustained by law Our Constitution guarantees Fundamental Rights to all our citizens the right to equality and freedom, right against exploitation, freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights and the right to constitutional remedies These provisions were inspired by the famous resolution moved at the Karachi session of Indian National Congress in March 1931 by Bapu himself Full observance of these rights is key to strengthening democracy

The working of our democracy under the most challenging circumstances is a matter of pride Though people did not initially believe in our capacity to run a democratic system, it is now regarded with admiration by the rest of the world Indeed, our successes have played no small part in the recent spread of democracy to other parts of the world Many of the new democracies look to our legislative and electoral practices as examples to emulate

The democratic process has ensured that our masses have a sense of participation in our development By giving them a stake, we encourage each one to make a contribution to nation-building Democracy must emanate from the grass roots Only then can society respond to the specific

requirements of our diverse people. Empowering panchayats and nagarpalikas reflect this commitment.

Elections are the practical manifestation of democracy. Each successful electoral exercise is a renewal of our democratic tradition. We have just completed elections to the State Legislatures in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa and Sikkim. A number of other States are due to hold elections shortly. These elections demonstrate the smooth functioning of our democracy and are of profound significance.

Political processes require popular support. A sense of fairplay is particularly important in a democracy. Therefore, where distortions have crept in, corrective measures have to be taken in the larger interest. The faith of the people in the purity of the electoral process has to be constantly strengthened.

As mass communication and literacy spread, more and more people will pay attention to the working of the political system. The awareness of our masses must not be underestimated. People expect probity and sincerity from their elected representatives. We expect the system to perform and to be sensitive to our needs. We believe that standards of public life, set by our national movement, must not be eroded. It is only then that the commitment to foster democracy can be fulfilled.

History, religion and culture have bequeathed to the people of India a common legacy that is shared by all of them. Pluralism has been our way of life. The Indian ethos has evolved with a history of co-existence and respect for differences. Narrowness of thought is not a part of this inheritance. National integration requires emphasizing commonalities and building on shared values. Even as we seek to strengthen unity, attempts to fragment society and accentuate differences, continue. These manifest themselves in communalism, chauvinism and in casteism. All these are equally dangerous to our unity and solidarity. Parochial loyalties must, therefore, be overcome.

After Independence, India has undoubtedly made sig-

nificant progress But we must recognize that political freedom is not complete without economic freedom Our task is to ensure that all our people are freed from want and provided with the basic amenities of life Material advancement is one aspect of our progress, the elimination of the inequities of the past is another As we build a just society, meeting rising aspirations is a significant challenge before us

Our country is today at an important juncture Growing demand and higher expectations necessitate expansion of the economy Living standards can be improved only by effective application of science and technology to our daily lives Judicious interaction with other economies will make our own economy more competitive as well as efficient As we move towards a more open economy, we have to make every effort to develop our human assets

India and its people have always nurtured a vision of a humane society We define progress not by the wealth of the elite but by the welfare of the masses In undertaking reform, it is important that its benefits accrue to all sections of society Only then the national consensus on vital issues can be strengthened

As we chart our future course, we will do well to draw on the rich legacy of our national movement Our struggle was uniquely non violent Non violence did not derive from weakness, but from faith in ourselves An extraordinary mass discipline under the inspiration of Bapu resulted in our success

A nation which could strive with such steadfastness for its freedom can surely bring to bear the same discipline to the task of national development Let it now be reflected, for example, in our work ethos and productivity Let it be revealed in a better civic sense, so that diseases like plague can be avoided in the future

"Freedom brings its own responsibilities and burdens," said Pandit Nehru, "and they can be shouldered only in the spirit of a free people, self disciplined and determined

to preserve and enlarge that freedom.”

The freedom that we have attained at such cost has to be defended against external forces. Those who threaten our unity have sought, through terrorism, to still the democratic process. These attempts can never succeed. India wishes to live in peace with all its neighbours. But our resolve to protect our vital interests must not be underestimated.

When the National tricolour unfurls tomorrow, on Republic Day, let us salute the flag of freedom and sacrifice, and strive for the greater glory of India. Let each one of us take a pledge to live up to our duties and responsibilities, conscious that we represent a great nation with a great destiny.

Need For Moral Rejuvenation

TOMORROW OUR NATION celebrates Republic Day. On this auspicious occasion, I have great pleasure in extending to you and all Indians beyond our shores my greetings and felicitations.

My comrades in the struggle for freedom would remember that 26 January had special emotional significance as *Purna Swaraj* Day. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the declaration of *Purna Swaraj* was a powerful expression of national resolve to attain complete freedom, independence and self-governance. The historic importance of 26 January is heightened by the coming into force of the Constitution of India on this date forty-six years ago.

Our Constitution, in essence, represents our national

philosophy The Constitution voices the social, economic and political covenant entered into by and for ourselves as equal citizens of our Republic

On Republic Day, we celebrate the pluralism, oneness, synthesis and harmony that are vital aspects of the very soul of India Indeed these are our Nation's defining characteristics—without which India would not truly be India

It is essential that all of us appreciate, in full measure, the determinant values of our nationhood More than ever, we as a people need to comprehend what it is that makes our nation, what sustains us, empowers our progress and gives to India a position of respect in the world as a whole

Undoubtedly, there is colossal power innate to democracy and pluralism—democratic pluralism—oriented to achieve growth with social justice We Indians must recognize this potential in ourselves as a people and be mindful of the conditions in which this nation building energy can be manifested for the good of all

We must nurture an environment for growth in which every individual can rise to her or his full potential—an environment in which the natural genius of the people of India can find unhampered expression We must constantly safeguard and strengthen the atmosphere of oneness and common endeavour That is of the essence in taking our great country forward

In the context of the present global geo political framework, it is crucially necessary that we have a clear understanding of our national interest

Pluralism has been central to India's intellectual and spiritual heritage from ancient times Respect for all religions and recognition of all religions as equally valid paths to truth, constitute a national tradition

Today we must also appreciate that pluralism is an indispensable pre requisite for national unity, and thus an essential pre requisite for national security and meaningful progress

Communalism and narrow thinking, therefore, directly jeopardize national security. There should be wider cognition of this fact. This assumes greater importance now as the general security environment warrants a high level of vigilance and preparedness.

Indeed, communalism, casteism, corruption and criminalization are evils which we must resolutely overcome. Increasingly, it is evident that these contaminants are interconnected, and are operating in tandem.

The more deep-seated and unyielding these evils appear, the more necessary it is that the power of the people be mobilized to expose and stamp them out. It is in the national interest to do so. These problems are neither endemic nor insoluble.

A radical, positive, change can certainly be effected, provided concerted steps are initiated by public-spirited citizens, the press, the judiciary and the executive authority.

A key element in such a movement for a cleaner public life would be the need for persons in prominent public offices to be in the forefront in setting a salutary example of rectitude, and of high standards of personal conduct and accountability.

A clear and unwavering moral and ethical commitment to the securing of true progress, is a basic requirement for our advancing in the right direction. Let us recall these words of the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, "Economic progress should be harmoniously co-ordinated with real progress. By economic progress I mean material advancement... *and by real progress is implied... ethical rejuvenation...*"

Such an approach is all the more necessary as we endeavour to build the wherewithal of a competitive economy capable of securing our rightful position of eminence. We have to do this facing the visible and the hidden challenges of the global economic order—structured and managed at present mainly by the developed nations.

In the economic sphere we have witnessed significant

growth of our GNP, and agricultural as well as industrial production. However, the task of ushering prosperity at all levels is of stupendous magnitude. As we go ahead with our programmes for restructuring the economy we have to be careful to ensure that our policies bring direct benefits to the poorest and the weakest.

Development generates its own pressures. We have to devise and adjust mechanisms and processes to secure aggregate equities in the use of our national resources and in the patterns of growth. In this we have an invaluable advantage in terms of the viable democratic institutions and processes developed from the panchayat to the federal levels. Experience has borne out the value of democratic decentralization of power. We can take justifiable pride in our having constituted panchayats and local bodies in the rural and urban areas across the length and breadth of the country. Panchayati Raj has potential for building a modern and progressive India in harmony with the felt needs and aspirations of the people. The level of commitment, zeal, efficiency and integrity of those working in these institutions will be crucial to their success - success in realizing the dream of the Father of our Nation.

It is vital that all the organs and mechanisms of our democratic polity function effectively in an atmosphere of mutual trust, willingness to share and perception of common interest in each other's progress. Such a climate of creative co-operation is of great value at all levels.

In our federal polity, the needs of equitable use of resources and balanced growth are reflected in the interactions between the Central Government and the States and as between different States. The basic object should be to build a strong Centre for strong States. We have much to be proud of, and to gain, by resolving complex issues in the spirit of mutual accommodation. Let us remember the dictum

न अय आत्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः

(We must be strong and principled to realize our full potential.)

The great prospects and challenges ahead call for a resolute effort by all—the *kisan*, the *jawan* and the *mazdoor* of whom we are very proud, and indeed by one and all. The women of India particularly must attain their due position as equal partners in every sector of nation-building activity.

In our parliamentary democracy, a major process to be undergone, before long, would be the elections to the Lok Sabha. Ours is the world's largest democracy. Elections are the life-breath of our system. Every care has to be taken to ensure that elections are free and fair and that the verdict of the people finds due and full expression. That is a sacred trust and responsibility which all of us as citizens share. The nation expects every entity and mechanism in our polity to perform respective designated roles harmoniously and with perfect constitutional propriety.

The message of India to our neighbourhood and to the rest of the world has been and will be peace, friendship and co-operation. The following verse expresses India's commitment from time immemorial to universal good :

सर्वे अपि सुखिनः सन्तु
 सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः
 सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु
 मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाक् भवेत् ॥

(May all secure happiness
 May all enjoy good health
 May all experience
 goodness around them
 Let none be in pain or sorrow)

Such has been India's outlook from our ancient past to the present day. We shall continue to play a vigilant and creative role in world affairs for the good of all humankind.

Tomorrow on our Republic Day, when we unfurl the national tri-colour, let us salute our flag of freedom; let us remember the heroic sacrifices of the martyrs and freedom fighters and re-dedicate ourselves to our motherland.

Sisters and brothers, may reason guide us, and may every citizen be a light unto himself and a friend to his neighbour
So may India be glorious

Strive For Excellence

ON THE EVE of our Republic Day, I have great pleasure in extending to you my warm greetings and good wishes I pray for your well-being, success and happiness I pray for India's advancement from strength to strength, rising to her full potential as a progressive, prosperous and powerful nation, leading the world in the years to come, to a higher level of civilization Indeed, this has been the dream, the vision, of the great stalwarts in our struggle for freedom In India's emancipation they saw a new hope for humanity I recall the inspiring words of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, whose birth centenary we are celebrating this year In a broadcast over the Azad Hind Radio on the 19th of February 1942, Netaji had said "Through India's liberation, will Asia and the world move forward towards the larger goal of human emancipation"

Friends, almost fifty years have passed since India became free Half a century may not seem much to us Indians as citizens of a nation whose history spans several thousands of years Yet this period is special, as our ancient Nation renews itself, recreates itself, and rediscovers, absorbs and assimilates the essentials of the democratic way of life This process of transformation involves reinstating in our national life the values, norms and ideals which were our own contribution to the world's heritage of humanistic thought Central to India's consciousness, these empowered our Nation's greatness When India moved away from these ideals the dark periods in our history occurred

Equality, unity, an outlook of friendship and co-operation, a sense of duty and responsibility towards the nation, an approach based on integrity, selflessness and the spirit of service—are aspects of a composite code of ethical and moral values that must inform, permeate and pervade our national life. A high level of commitment in this respect is a *sine qua non* for the successful working of our elaborate, sensitive and interlinked systems of constitutional, political and administrative functions.

Republic Day, particularly in this auspicious Golden Jubilee Year of Independence, is an appropriate occasion to review dispassionately our achievements, the extent to which we have progressed in attaining our goals, the problems and difficulties we encounter and the steps we must take to overcome the challenges that confront us.

We citizens can justifiably be proud of India's achievements after Independence. Despite a variety of difficulties, it is readily acknowledged that in every sphere and sector, primary, secondary and tertiary, there has been tangible progress and positive attainment. Our nation has gained almost five decades of experience in the functioning of the parliamentary form of governance in a federal system. We are pressing ahead with democratic decentralization through Panchayati Raj. We are well aware now of the strengths and advantages that democracy confers. Equally we ought to be sensitive to the principles and proprieties that need to be safeguarded to maintain and develop democratic institutions and processes on a wholesome basis in tune with the true interest of our nation and people.

Today, we have the infrastructure for dynamic growth and progress. We have the constitutional, political and administrative framework that can be drawn upon to take India into the 21st Century, closer to the goals that we have set ourselves—the goals of growth with social justice and the building of a Welfare State.

And yet who can deny the range of problems and deficiencies which cry for solution? Abject poverty, hunger,

disease and ignorance torment many and raise questions as to the validity and efficaciousness of our policies and programmes Crimes against weaker sections and women, acts of violence and intimidation, challenge our claims of building an egalitarian society The fruits of progress to a substantial extent are negated by our burgeoning population and the complexities innate to the task of equitable distribution in a country of India's diversities and dimensions

More than seven decades ago, Mahatma Gandhi had cautioned against what he termed as the Seven Social Sins Writing in *Young India* in 1925, Bapu raised his finger against Politics without Principles, Wealth without Work, Pleasure without Conscience, Education without Character, Commerce without Morality, Science without Humanity and Worship without Sacrifice

Friends, I feel we need to ponder over Bapu's words I feel convinced that India's need today is for a profound moral and ethical rejuvenation, the building of a nation wide commitment to our national values and goals and the integration and unification of the people Simultaneously, there must be a forthright and outright rejection of casteism and communalism with its invidious, sinister nexus with corruption and criminality Increasingly it is evident that India's failing to rid herself of these evils will aggravate the ills and vulnerabilities that vex our nation and lead to grave consequences I sincerely hope the Nation heeds Bapu's words

As we look to the future we must keep two critical aspects clearly in mind Our approach will have to be value-based and people-centred Our many institutions of democratic governance and progress—Parliament, the Judiciary, the Executive, the Civil Services, the Press—can only be as effective as those responsible for the functioning of these institutions wish them to be To safeguard our institutions from erosion, and to build their strength and make them more efficient and responsive to the aspirations of the people, we must bring to bear the spirit of patriotic fervour, commitment, dedication, integrity and selfless service

which imbued our struggle for freedom. These are the values that were illuminated by our great national leaders. It is obvious that only by making these values an integral part of our life and work can we take our great nation forward and provide a productive and fulfilling life for our people. It is only in this manner that we can succeed in reinvigorating our public life and dispelling the cynicism, despondency and disenchantment, that appear to be affecting the national atmosphere and mood.

Every citizen of India bears an immediate and direct responsibility. Patriotism requires a constant striving for excellence by every citizen as his or her own contribution to national reconstruction. We must all develop a broad nationalist outlook whereby we view every issue not in a limited, narrow or parochial perspective but in the context of the good of the nation. We must remain deeply conscious always that progress by individuals or groups in society is possible and meaningful only with national advancement.

Friends, the world today is witnessing significant global trends towards integration, both economic and political. New regimes for international economic exchange have been set in train. Powerful regional blocks have emerged. India must be well prepared to deal with the situation involving these dynamic trends and to safeguard and advance national interest in the rapidly changing international environment. A country of India's size and population with her vast pool of highly technically trained manpower, and institutional infrastructure will have to ensure that scope is created for participation on a just and equal basis in the emerging world order.

Within our own region following several landmark developments, there are now significantly improved prospects of peace, security and co-operation for mutual benefit. We will persevere in these efforts, and shall continue to play a vigilant and creative role in world affairs for the good of all humankind.

On the occasion of Republic Day, my thoughts are with

our brave and valiant soldiers, sailors and airmen. The Indian Armed Forces serve the nation with professionalism, devotion and dedication under difficult and trying conditions. They deserve the nation's gratitude and tributes for their selfless service and sacrifice. On our part we have to ensure that our defence forces are well equipped and prepared to safeguard the nation's territorial integrity and security.

Tomorrow, when we unfurl the national tricolour, let us salute our flag of freedom, reiterate our national resolve and rededicate ourselves to our Motherland. The greatest democracy in the world must prove herself as a powerful force striving for universal values and ideals and contributing to global peace, friendship and progress.

Brothers and sisters, may reason guide us and may every citizen be a light unto himself and a friend to his neighbour. So may India be glorious.



K.R. Narayanan

(25 07.1997-...)

Mobilise Against Forces of Violence

IT IS WITH pride and pleasure that I join you in the celebrations of our Republic Day. It falls within the year of the Golden Jubilee of our Independence. On this doubly auspicious occasion I extend my warm greetings to all fellow citizens in India and abroad and to our defence forces guarding the integrity and security of our country.

Republic Day is more than a national day, it is the anniversary of a defining moment in our history. It was on this day in January 1930 that the Indian National Congress meeting on the banks of river Ravi declared that "the goal of India was *Purna Swaraj*, that it was the right of every Indian, as of any other people, to have freedom", and that "if any government deprives a people of their rights and oppresses them, the people will have the further right to alter it or to abolish it". It was on the same day in January 1950, that we gave to ourselves a Constitution.

Among the foremost of the goals we set before ourselves were our unity as a nation and a people, and their journey towards an egalitarian order.

From the Upanishadic idea of the world as a single family to our struggles for independence, for nation building, and for world co operation, India was preoccupied with the concept of unity. This urge for unity was as much a product of our philosophical and humanistic thinking as a response to the challenge of the wildly pluralistic nature of our society. We know that this unity in diversity is the secret of our viability as a nation and our strength, the binding force of our age old culture, the long tradition of our tolerance, the net work of socio economic bonds that we have built up among our people, and above all our vibrant democracy, have made the unity of India unassailable. And yet there is our

historic tendency to quarrel among ourselves. In the midst of these differences and quarrels we should not forget to nurture and strengthen the unity, integrity and security of the nation. The sagacious words of Bhishma in a *Shanti Parva* of *Mahabharata* we must pay heed to seriously:

गण मुख्यैस्तु सम्भूय कार्यं गणहितं मिथः
पृथग्गणस्य भिन्नस्य विततस्य ततोऽन्यथाः
अर्थाः प्रत्यवसीदन्ति तथानर्था भवन्ति च ।

(Leaders of the republic should unitedly pursue the interests of the republic as a whole, otherwise discord among them leads to emergence of numerous antagonistic groups, which disrupt its functioning, leading to disastrous consequences.)

The unity of a country also is the combined outcome of political, social, and economic development, and of a sense of fairness and justice pervading the body-politic as a whole. The State should deliver the goods to the people and meet their established and rising expectations. We have registered some notable successes in this respect. At Independence our agriculture was at subsistence levels and our industrial development was rudimentary. Thanks to eight Five Year Plans, six years of economic reforms and the harnessing of science and technology for economic development, India has made a great deal of progress on all fronts. Slowly but surely our economy is being transformed, real incomes are rising, life expectancy has doubled and poverty has declined. During the Eighth Five Year Plan economic growth accelerated to attain an average of 6.5 per cent per year, the highest achieved during any Five Year Plan period. Despite the unprecedented financial and economic crisis in neighbouring countries of East Asia, the Indian economy has continued to perform well and the external sector has remained resilient, partly due to the indigenous prudence we have exercised in the execution of our liberalization programmes.

In spite of the Green Revolution it is an unfortunate

fact that hunger and malnutrition persist in our rural as well as urban areas. There is the need now to go beyond the Green Revolution and bring about a nutritional revolution in the country. The food and nutritional needs of the poor in India especially of children and women must be tackled. Besides, on this anniversary of our Republic we must resolve to complete the unfinished task of land reforms that we embarked upon years ago and empower the landless poor and small farmers who have not got any benefits from the Green Revolution. Much of the poverty and unrest in rural India—the caste conflicts and the economic violence—can be traced to the gross injustice in the distribution of land and to some kind of a counter revolution that is taking place holding up the implementation of land reforms and the snatching away of whatever benefits progressive legislations had bestowed upon the poor.

As a people we are generally prone to take delight in debunking our achievements and successes. That is not an altogether negative fact. But on an occasion such as this we must count our blessings and celebrate our successes. We must also squarely face up to our failures and shortcomings. One often hears people asking why it is that after 50 years of independence, there are in India the largest number of people living below the poverty line. And that in the midst of plenty and wasteful conspicuous consumption among sections of our society. Indeed the idea of austerity and the word itself has disappeared from our vocabulary. As regards literacy, is it not a shame that in this land known for its traditions of philosophy, scholarship and intellectualism, there exist the largest number of illiterates in the world?

To find an answer to these ironies we must look at our society with open and penetrating eyes. Ours is a society divided vertically and horizontally in innumerable compartments. Economic development, technological changes, social reform movements have not succeeded in pulling down these domestic walls, even though they have been considerably lowered, and benefits of development do not

flow from one compartment to another. The result is uneven development and existence of plenty and poverty, change and stagnation almost side by side. How can we tolerate indefinitely these dangerous dichotomies and inequalities?

We are witnessing today uncontrolled growth of communalism and casteism snuffing out the lights of secularism in our society, and the increase in corruption, violence and criminalisation of politics and society. The State and the Government have the responsibility of dealing with these dark forces threatening the fabric of our society and our cherished values. But people themselves have a responsibility and a role to play.

In 1947 when Mahatma Gandhi decided to go on a fast in the face of the communal carnage in Calcutta, a distinguished leader wrote to him trying to dissuade him from taking the step. He asked "Can you fast against *goondas*?" Gandhiji's reply was revealing: "It is we who make the *goondas*. Without our sympathy and passive support *goondas* will have no leg to stand upon. I want to reach the hearts of the people behind the *goondas*." In the situation obtaining today the people have the right, the duty and the opportunity to dissociate themselves from individuals and groups who propagate and indulge in corruption, violence, and crimes against society. They must not give them passive support, as Gandhiji advised, and shun and isolate them in society. Together with governmental action this would produce results.

In this context we can take a lesson from our experience of fighting terrorism in Punjab, Assam and Kashmir. The people tired of violence and insecurity dared to break out of the mystique of fear of the terrorist and asserted their will for normal life. This was followed by democratic elections which acted as some sort of a social and political therapy. The essential element in all this was the attitude of the people.

We have to mobilise ourselves and harness our energies against the forces of violence, corruption, communalism and

casteism And we will have to realise the energies of women, scheduled castes, tribes, backward classes and minorities The social, economic and political empowerment of women is a pre requisite to the revitalisation of our development and democratic processes My fellow citizens, in a few days we will be observing the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi This kind of collective action is the least that we can do in memory of his great sacrifice And within a couple of weeks the Nation will go to polls in the largest democratic elections in the world involving an electorate of 600 million people I have no doubt that under the vigilant eye of the Election Commission of India we will have free and fair elections in which the people could express their sovereign will

Fellow citizens, while we are engrossed in our own concerns and problems, we cannot forget that we live in a world and in a neighbourhood We can take pride that we are regarded in the world as a mature and a vibrant democracy, and a country that is forging ahead into the 21st Century as a considerable economic and industrial power In the past we have given to the world great ideas and philosophies After Independence we have had the privilege of initiating the policy of non-alignment and we have worked for peace in the world with sincerity and passion Today in co-operation with the peoples of the world, particularly the non-aligned and developing countries, we are working for a just, equitable and peaceful world order We have extended our hands of co-operation and friendship to our close neighbours Our destiny is linked with their destiny And we stand for friendship with all nations and pursue our objectives of peace, disarmament and development On the occasion of our Republic Day we send our greetings to all the nations of the world And to my sisters and brothers and to the youth of this great country I convey my good wishes for the Republic Day

May the flag that will be unfurled tomorrow on State buildings and atop millions of homes inspire us to work for peace and prosperity that is shared by all in this motherland of ours

Let the Musical Note of Nationalism Resonate in All Hearts

IN A FEW hours from now, we will be completing forty-nine years as a Sovereign Democratic Republic. And we will enter the Golden Jubilee Year of our *Ganatantra*. It is with the greatest joy and a sense of pride, that I extend to each of you, whether residing in India or abroad, my warmest greetings and felicitations.

Our thoughts turn today to that glorious hour on January 26, 1950 when the Indian nation gave to itself a Constitution. In an exquisite balance of various streams of ideas and in language that is poetical, the Preamble to the Constitution pledged to secure for our people, "justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity, and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation."

It was in pursuit of this composite ideal that we have built up, during the last half-century, an edifice of political democracy that is today the envy of many other nations. Political freedom in India today is vibrant and unconfined, but the pursuit of social and economic freedom is still on, and the nation's efforts are focussed on "justice, social and economic" envisaged in the Preamble, the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of the Constitution. We have to endeavour with sincerity and seriousness to remove every injustice, every discrimination from every quarter, and as the Father of the Nation has put it, "wipe every tear from every eye".

Speaking in the course of the debates in the Constituent Assembly, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar observed: "On 26th January,

we are going to enter a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life we shall by reasons of our social and economic structure continue to deny one man one value." And he then asked "How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we deny equality in our social and economic life?"

Republic Day is an appropriate occasion for us to evaluate the facts of our society and our economy, and to examine our hearts to find out how far we have succeeded in overcoming these contradictions in our minds and in the objective conditions of the life of our people.

We recall today with pride our accomplishments since those early days of the Republic. First and foremost in a land where famine stalked periodically and life for the common man, was to use the words of Gandhiji "an eternal trance or an eternal vigil", we have brought about, thanks to the Green Revolution, self-sufficiency of foodgrains. It is no mean achievement, my friends, to be able to feed a population now nearing one billion mark without having to depend on the mercy of others. India today ranks among the major economies, advanced in modern industry and occupying the forefront of scientific and technological development in the world. We have given rise in an enterprising middle class the size of the entire population of India at the time of Independence. In this era of liberalization they have become a potent force imparting momentum to the developmental process and to the wheels of commerce. India today is looked upon as one of the largest and enticing markets of the world. Our GNP is one of the biggest in the world and our growth rate and other economic parameters have been affected only marginally by the economic crisis in other parts of Asia. This emphasizes the basic strength of the Indian economy and the validity of the policies we have pursued. But in the midst of these remarkable economic achievements we have to recognize that economic disparities in the country have also increased. For example, the number of people living below the poverty

line is estimated a little larger than the size of India's population at the time of Independence.

There is a consensus in the world today that economic development is not all and the GDP is not necessarily a measure of progress of a society. India is one of the countries which has traditionally attached importance to the development of man including spiritual development. The leaders of the Indian renaissance and the Indian nationalist movement had given capital importance to the social transformation and modernization of this ancient land. Following Independence, we have passed many laws emancipating and investing women, the deprived sections, and workers and peasants with social and economic rights. These are laws and policy measures of which the country can be proud, though they did not go far enough and were often frustrated in the process of implementation.

Some of the very basic measures of far-reaching significance that we have taken of late are the constitutional amendments establishing Panchayati Raj and local self-government and giving one-third representation to women in these grass-roots democratic bodies. These have made a creative stir in our society and mark an important step in the participation of the ordinary people in local government and development and in the empowerment of women. The government and all political parties are committed to the idea of reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislatures. I do hope that India will enter the new millennium with our women folk unchained and empowered.

And yet we are witnesses to the sorry spectacle of the suppression of women, Dalits and other deprived sections of society—denials of rights granted to them by law, violence and crimes committed against them, molestation of women in the barbarous practice of eve-teasing, dowry killings, and gang rapes not only for lust but as a brutal method of social revenge and social punishment. The government and society as a whole must redouble their efforts to blot out such crimes and the unholy alliance of crime and corruption from our society.

You are aware that government in India have been concerned with education, health care, population growth, environmental protection and related problems. We have been the pioneers in the world in family planning, taking part in the world movement on environment and proclaiming our passion for removing illiteracy, ignorance and disease from among our people. It is the irony of history that we find our country placed very low down in the world, in the human development index, lower than several Asian and African countries.

In the realm of knowledge and scholarship what pride of place had India occupied in the world in ancient times? Swami Vivekananda had observed, with his insight into our social reality, that the decline of India in the past has been due to the monopolising of learning and education in the hands of a few sections of our society. In the modern period, our reformers and leaders and all our enlightened personalities had proclaimed the supreme importance of literacy and education. The need of the hour is not to repeat this rhetoric, but take practical steps to remove illiteracy. In recent years we have made progress in this field through our various programmes. It is gratifying that the Ninth Five Year Plan has given priority to the spread of elementary education. Let us greet the new millennium with a mass campaign for total literacy.

Another area on which we have talked so much but neglected in terms of actual action is the control of our population—that ceaseless torrent of babies of which the Westerners used to taunt us in the past. Today we have the know-how, the techniques as well as the desire on the part of our people to adopt methods of family planning. What we have to do is to mobilise the people in a campaign instead of dissipating our energies in ephemeral activities. Environmental questions are related to population explosion and are equally important for the health of our people in the present and their welfare in the future.

I had mentioned, at the outset of this talk, the Preamble to our Constitution. In that Preamble, which contained the condensed essence of the Constitution, reference

was made to promoting among the people "fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation". That sense of fraternity is the indispensable intangible that holds together our society with all its multifaceted diversity and luxuriant pluralism. The unity of our Nation is not based on any monolithic idea, but on our age-old tradition of tolerance which is at once a pragmatic concept of living together and a philosophic concept of finding truth and goodness in every religion. Long ago Mahatma Gandhi put it very simply, "I do not expect the India of my dream to develop one religion, i.e. to be wholly Hindu or wholly Christian or wholly Mussalman, but I want it to be wholly tolerant, with its religions working side by side with one another". Years later Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, speaking in the Constituent Assembly when the national flag was formally adopted, said : "The Flag tells us, be ever alert, be ever on the move, go forward, work for a free, flexible, compassionate, decent, democratic society in which Christians, Sikhs, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, will all find a safe shelter."

Tomorrow morning when we raise the national flag it is this ideal that we will be upholding for the millions of our people and the world to see. India has believed throughout our long history in the idea of the whole world being a single family. In the bitter and divided days of the Cold War we proclaimed the essential unity of the world through our policy of non-alignment, and today when the idea of a unipolar world is being projected, we adhere to non-alignment and peaceful co-existence as a policy for a pluralistic pattern for the world. And we believe as passionately as ever in complete and comprehensive disarmament, including the abolition of all weapons of mass destruction. As Pandit Nehru said, India will work for a world of peace, "a world in which there is free co-operation of free peoples and no class or group exploits another".

Fellow citizens, sisters and brothers, *kisans*, *mazdoors*, teachers, students, managers and entrepreneurs, scientists and technologists whose brilliant contributions have brought honour to our country, and the officers and men of our

armed forces who guard the safety and security of our nation with such utter devotion—may I extend to you all greetings and good wishes for a Happy Republic Day As our great poet Maithili Sharan Gupta has sung "Let all brothers share joys and sorrows in equal measure and let the musical note of nationalism resonate in the hearts of all"

सुख और दुख में एक-सा सब भाइयो का भाग हो
अन्तःकरण में गूँजता राष्ट्रीयता का राग हो।

People are Supreme

ON THE EVE of the Golden Jubilee of our Republic I have the privilege to extend to all Indians living in India or abroad, my heartiest greetings and felicitations I also send my greetings to the brave personnel of our armed forces who stand guard to defend the unity and territorial integrity of the nation And I pay my homage to the memory of those who laid down their lives in the defence of the Republic from external aggression and intermittent terrorist attacks across the border On this solemn occasion our thoughts go back to the Father of the Nation who lived and died for the freedom and unity of our nation, and to the countless men and women who followed him into the arena and faced immense hardships and sufferings in the heroic struggle for independence Our thoughts also go back to the founding fathers of our Constitution whose far sighted vision and arduous labours gave us a Constitution which enshrined the traditional concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity adding to them the concept of justice—social, economic and political—and declaring our nation is sovereign democratic Republic

The word 'Republic' is no ordinary word It is a

commitment to the effect that, in our State, supreme power is exercised not by some remote monarch but by the people. It is an affirmation that the wielder of power in India—the *adhinayaka*—is the great aggregation of our people as a whole, whom Rabindranath Tagore has immortalized as the *jana-gana*. Let us, on this anniversary, hail that proclamation and commitment. Let us celebrate the exceptional status we enjoy, the status of being the world's largest democracy. Given the chequered career of democracies elsewhere, we can be grateful to be citizens of this Republic; where an individual, be he ever so high, the Constitution and the laws made by the people remain higher than him; and where the Executive remains accountable to the Parliament.

Thanks to our early and visionary support to science and technology we have made advances in that field as would excite human imagination anywhere; thanks to our *kisans* and *mazdoors* and entrepreneurs the wheels of our agriculture, commerce and industry turn steadily with the world; and thanks, above all, to the striving of our agricultural communities, our granaries remain full. From the 1970s when our GDP grew at only around 3.5 per cent per annum, economic growth rate has accelerated to around 6.5 per cent. It is not generally realised that in the 1990s, India has become one of the ten fastest growing economies in the world. We can be justly proud of the abundance of our entrepreneurial ability, the high levels of domestic private savings, and also of the high level of managerial and technical skills. All these have enabled our economic reforms to have a solid and a stable base for further and more rapid growth.

This is a day when we take pride in our achievements, but it must surely also be a day of honest self-analysis and self-questioning about where we, as a people and a society, are headed?

Fifty years into our life in the Republic we find that justice—social, economic and political—remains an unrealized

dream for millions of our fellow citizens. The benefits of our economic growth are yet to reach them. We have one of the world's largest reservoirs of technical personnel, but also the world's largest number of illiterates, the world's largest middle class, but also the largest number of people below the poverty line, and the largest number of children suffering from malnutrition. Our giant factories rise from out of squalor, our satellites shoot up from the midst of the hovels of the poor. Not surprisingly, there is sullen resentment among the masses against their condition erupting often in violent forms in several parts of the country. Tragically, the growth in our economy has not been uniform. It has been accompanied by great regional and social inequalities. Many a social upheaval can be traced to the neglect of the lowest tier of society, whose discontent moves towards the path of violence. Dalits and tribals are the worst affected by all this. In parts of rural India forms of sadism seem to be earmarked for Dalit women. From the time of Draupadi, our womenfolk had been subjected to public disrobing and humiliation as a means of vendetta—individual, social or political. For Dalit women it has become a common experience in rural areas, but what is astounding is that it has been extended as one of the methods of ragging in our elite colleges and universities.

To open a newspaper or to hear the news over television now requires nerves of steel. Violence in society has bared a hundred fangs as the advertisement driven consumerism is unleashing frustrations and tensions in our society. The unabashed, vulgar indulgence in conspicuous consumption by the *nouveau riche* has left the underclass seething in frustration. One half of our society guzzles aerated beverages while the other has to make do with palmfuls of muddied water. Our three-way fast-lane of liberalization, privatisation and globalisation must provide safe pedestrian crossings for the unempowered India also so that it too can move towards 'Equality of Status and Opportunity'. "Beware of the fury of the patient man" says the old adage. One could say 'beware of the fury of the patient and long suffering people'.

We cannot and ought not halt movement in the trajectories of our modern progress. Factories will and must rise, satellites must and will soar to the heavens, and dams over rivers will rise to prevent floods, generate electricity and irrigate dry lands for cultivation. But that should not cause ecological and environmental devastation, and the uprooting of human settlements, especially of tribals and the poor. Ways and methods can be found for countering the harmful impact of modern technology on the lives of the common people. I believe that the answer to the ill-effects of science and technology is not to turn our back on technology, but to have more science and technology that is directed to human needs and for the betterment of the human condition. While Government must be held responsible for environmental and human consequences of mega projects, the responsibility for environmental protection cannot, however, lie with Government alone. It must also be borne by civil society. There is need to improve the tone of our social and economic life through improved work ethic and environmental behaviour. Far too many of us lack the professional pride to see a task well proformed, a responsibility well borne. Accountability in the delivery of public services is shockingly low. One reason why our infrastructure remains weak is that the quality of civil work executed is poor—compromised by sub-standard materials, corrupt practices and sloppy supervision. We ignore the social dimension of our actions and practices. The late Dr. Adiseshiah, one of our prominent economists and academicians, wrote about his mother that she was a high born lady who kept her house spotlessly clean. Every morning she used the sweep and clean the household herself and then dump the rubbish in the neighbour's garden. Self-regarding purity and righteousness ignoring others has been the bane of our culture. It has created a gulf in our society between people even with regard to the basic needs and fundamental rights. For example, water is a basic need and a fundamental right of the people. Yet today millions of our people are struggling to get adequate clean drinking water. Less than 150 years ago, there were hardly any

government sponsored water supply schemes in India. But India had a long standing strong tradition of water management, which was built on the technology of rain water harvesting. Not only that tradition still survives in the North East and the Himalayan region like Ladakh but remnants of that tradition can be found in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan and other States. There is no reason why we cannot revive this tradition of our forefathers. Water is required for not only drinking, but for agriculture and animal husbandry. Good water management can help to increase water supply and regenerate rural ecology and rural economy. Governments efforts to increase water supply can be supplemented by a people's movement to capture and conserve rain water. We have to organize a people's movement for stopping the pollution of our rivers and ground water reserves. This would be a great contribution to our economy as well as to public health.

I have referred to the question of illiteracy in our country. It is today an accepted fact that literacy and education is at the root of human as well as economic development. Why is it that as a nation we do not feel the desperate urgency of making our people literate? I hope that vested interests have not been fearful of awakening the masses through education. On the contrary we should have faith in the people. We should organize a mass movement for literacy. Cannot we involve the millions of our students, teachers and civil servants to spread literacy among the masses, at least on a part time basis? Through such a movement not only literacy but national and social causes like population control, environmental consciousness could be spread among the people, not to speak of awareness of and opposition to many ills that are plaguing our society. Fortunately civic action in India have multiplied during recent years. The civil society should be further encouraged to grow and address social, cultural and environmental challenges confronting the nation. We need a comprehensive policy to promote the growth of civil society interacting with various branches and levels of Government. Even in a

developed and affluent society like the U.S.A. there are around 6 million such organizations disposing of 8 per cent of the country's GDP in their activities. Not only the Government but the private sector also has an important role to play in a comprehensive civic action plan. We have a model for us in the constructive programme chalked out and implemented during the independence movement by Mahatma Gandhi.

I said a little earlier that this is an occasion for honest self-analysis. I think it would not be wrong to say that as a society we are becoming increasingly insensitive and callous. Gandhiji had tried to popularize the Gujarati song, which describes the 'true Vaishnava' as one who knows the other person's pain. He may not find too many of that description in India today. Be it the way cars and buses are driven in our city roads, the way garbage and, particularly, middle class plastic garbage, is strewn around, the way public servants treat the public, or the public handles public utilities, the manner in which we squander or pollute precious reserves like water, the way owners of vehicles allow toxic gases to be spewed into the air that we breathe, the way we allow children to be exploited, the disabled to be passed by, speaks of a stony-hearted society, not a compassionate one that produced the Buddha, Mahavira, Nanak, Kabir and Gandhi.

And then there is our greatest national drawback: the status of our women, and our greatest national shame, the condition of the Dalits, the erstwhile untouchables. Fifty years after our Constitution, the plain truth is that the female half of Indian population continues to be regarded as it was in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is more than 170 years since Raja Rammohan Roy caused *sati* to be abolished. But the infamous practice still manages to raise its head and, what is worse, even gets explained away as 'suicide' or as saintly sacrifice! What one finds disconcerting is even the absence of political rhetoric on these social ills. Commenting on the male-female disparity in India, Gandhiji wrote in 1931: (and I quote) "You cannot have one set of

weights and measures for the one and a different one for the other Yet we have never heard of a husband mounting the funeral pyre of his deceased wife" (Unquote) Unless the status of women in Indian society changes, the 'Equality' spoken of in our Preamble will remain hollow It is against this attitude of society and the habit of discrimination prevalent in society that the demand for constitutional reservation for women in the Legislatures and Parliament has become a compelling necessity

We have to ponder over the condition of not only women in our society, but of the Dalits, the tribals and other weaker sections Untouchability has been abolished by law but shades of it remain in the ingrained attitudes nurtured by the caste system Though the constitutional provision of reservation in educational institutions and public services flow from our Constitution, these provisions remain unfulfilled through bureaucratic and administrative deformation or by narrow interpretations of these special provisions It seems, in the social realm, some kind of a counter revolution is taking place in India It is forgotten that these benefits have been provided not in the way of charity, but as human rights and as social justice to a section of society who constitute a big chunk of our population, and who actually contribute to our agriculture, industry and services as landless labourers, factory and municipal workers There are signs that our privileged classes are getting tired of the affirmative action provided by Constitutional provisions On this Golden Jubilee, I would like to say that let us not get tired of what we have provided for our weaker sections, for otherwise as Dr Ambedkar pointed out, the edifice of our democracy would be like a palace built on dung heap

If on an occasion like this Golden Jubilee of our Republic we ponder some of these issues, it would be the better for us While there is need to be honest with ourselves, I must emphasize, we must act, not despair In moments of crisis we rise gloriously to the occasion as few societies do The late war in Kargil showed it, the cyclone

in Orissa did so too. And, even more recently, the stoic fortitude with which the nearly 170 passengers and crew aboard the hijacked plane showed how we are capable of the highest endurance, calm, fortitude and human care. But we do not have to reserve our best qualities for national or natural calamities, they should manifest themselves in our daily life. The Biblical exhortation 'Do not do unto others what thou wouldn't not others do unto thyself' was anticipated by Vyasa in his words.

(Aatmanaha pratikulaani pareshaam na samaacharet)

The world watches us with a combination of admiration and concern: admiration at what we have achieved despite great odds, and concern over the fact that, even with great investments of money and energy we remain far from our goal. Indians do well, they say; India does not. We must examine the import of that observation and try to rectify the situation. Of course the rest of the world, too, is faced by crises. The end of the Cold War has not ended all conflicts, it has only changed its character. Even as we want equality amongst ourselves, so do we want equality among the nations of the world. This does not and cannot mean that all countries have the same of everything. But it does mean that no nation or continent can seek overlordship over others claiming political, economic, technological or strategic superiority. We are privileged, as Indians, to have played a leading role in the decolonizing of the mighty continents of Asia and Africa. We are the initiators of the concept of non-alignment in a world when it was bitterly divided by Cold War, and whether the great powers now recognize or not the role of non-alignment in ending the Cold War, the fact of its contribution remains for all to see. And we are also co-authors with the People's Republic of China of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence which provide the world a code of conduct in international relations. The principles like the respect for the territorial integrity and independence of nations, non-interference in their internal matters and mutual benefit and equality are precious concepts which cannot become redundant in a world of

globalisation We are privileged also to be playing a role to see that in the new millennium all the nations of the world, enjoy the same political status and have a level playing field, economically and technologically This will be our endeavour in all the world bodies of which we are proud to be members or associated with—the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the Non Aligned Movement and the new formations such as the WTO and important regional groupings like ASEAN, SAARC, the Indian Ocean Rim Association

We are proud to belong to South Asia and to the Asian Continent We celebrate this year the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with China We wish the country and its people every happiness We want to live in peace with Pakistan We want the relations to conform to the best traditions of good neighbourliness, eschewing terrorist interventions and the propaganda of hatred In the spirit in which Jawaharlal Nehru declared in the Constituent Assembly, I take this opportunity to send greetings to all our immediate neighbours, to the sister continent of Africa, the Commonwealth of Nations, the European Union, the United States of America and Latin America, to Japan, and to the Arab nations and the countries of the Pacific and Central Asia with whom we have traditional ties of friendship To Russia with which our political, economic, cultural and strategic relations remain strong we reiterate our fraternal goodwill

I once again extend my greetings to all fellow citizens May all of us cross the golden milestone and march along the vision of the founding fathers of our Republic

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